

The State

Its Origin and Function

William Paul

WILLIAM PAUL

The State: Its Origin and Function

First published by Socialist Press 1917

Copyright © 1917 by William Paul

First edition

This book was professionally typeset on Reedsy.

Find out more at reedsy.com

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	iv
1 SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS	1
2 ATHENS	38
3 ROME	54
4 MIDDLE AGES	74
5 LAW	88
6 THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH	96
7 THE FEUDAL STATE	105
8 THE RISE OF THE CAPITALIST STATE	122
9 RISE OF INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM	137
10 MODERN CAPITALISM	151
11 REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM	173

Preface

THE FUNCTION OF HISTORY

The Socialist Labour Party, since its inception, has insisted upon the need for a clear and comprehensive grasp of the evolution of society and its various social institutions. We have emphasised this need, not because it is our desire to breed a group of “intellectual” theorists in our midst, but rather because we are convinced that clear thinking must precede intelligent action. It is necessary to know the past in order to understand the present, and by clearly grasping the salient features concerning both past and present we can the more clearly discern the future. The study of the past, therefore, throws a penetrating light upon the nature of existing social institutions, and clearly shows the functions they perform. To the Socialist the study of history is neither an academic nor an intellectual form of recreation. It is, on the contrary, an imperative duty. We analyse the past not so much for its own sake as for the invaluable assistance it renders in enabling us to forecast the future. If the study of history cannot help us to solve the immediate problems confronting humanity, then the time spent studying it were better employed doing something more practical.

Hence the Socialist Labour Party has directed its energies upon the organisation of Social Science Classes in various parts of the country. In a word, the Socialist Labour Party is first an Educational Force. And this explains its success as an Agitational Force. We are convinced that Capitalism cannot be successfully combatted until it and its various institutions are fully understood.

Need for Definitions

Social science, like every branch of science, uses terms which must be clearly defined. The reason for this is to avoid confusion. Definitions are absolutely necessary in chemistry. Without these the chemist, in making up prescriptions, might select prussic acid instead of some innocent compound which had the same appearance. While, therefore, a clear comprehension of terms is scientifically imperative, it would seem that many noisy dabblers in social science do not realise that grave dangers may arise by confusing the minds of the workers regarding the nature and function of social institutions.

As an illustration of what we mean, let the reader note the tragic confession made by a distinguished and well-meaning Labour leader regarding the melancholy dilemma of his organisation when it realised that State Socialism was not Socialism at all. Writing on this point, Mr. R. MacDonald woefully admits: "Perhaps we have not always been careful to avoid confusion in the words we have used." (Labour Leader, 7th August, 1910.) Here, indeed, is the fundamental error that causes untold blunders and failures — the confusion of terms and words. The aim, therefore, of this brief work is to show that a certain influential section of the Labour Movement has been using the term "State" without clearly realising exactly what the State is, and the function it plays in social evolution.

No attempt has been made to make the subject dealt with look either "scholarly" or "intellectual." The facts are stated clearly, perhaps a little crudely, but in such a manner that the wearied worker may easily grasp the true nature and object of the political State. The following chapters are based upon a series of lectures delivered by the writer to the Birmingham and Derby Social Science Classes. In order that the subject may be studied in more detail, several books are referred to which may be purchased from the Socialist Labour Press. If this outline of the history of the State encourages members of the Labour Movement to study the subject for themselves, then the object of the writer and the aim of the Party will have been realised.

— *Socialist Labour Press.*

“The modern State is but an executive committee for administering the affairs of the whole capitalist class.”

— *From “The Communist Manifesto,” by Marx & Engels.*

“The use of history is to give value to the present and its duty.”

— *Emerson.*

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

The Political State is one of the most important social institutions ever created by man. It has played a most conspicuous part in the history of humanity, and it is, therefore, necessary that the working class should know something regarding its origin and function. A social institution is a machine, or organ, specially devised to perform some social function, It arises not as the result of individual caprice but as the inevitable outcome of definite historic conditions. Therefore, the correct historical method of investigating the social role of any institution is to clearly comprehend the social conditions, the soil as it were, from which it emerged. Hence Aristotle insisted that those who wish to understand the nature of any institution must first seek its origin in the social ground that gave it birth. No one can possibly know anything regarding the Great European War who does not understand the history of Europe prior to August, 1914. It is, therefore, one of the fundamental principles of Social Science that, in order to thoroughly grasp the function of any institution, it is imperative to know as much about its origin as possible.

In order to facilitate our study, we intend to examine the historic period preceding the rise of private property and civilisation. This is necessary, because many superficial writers on history too readily assume that the State is eternal — that it has always existed. It is in the primitive stage of ancient society wherein we can most clearly observe the need for, and consequently the birth of, the Political State.

Man and Tools

Man has never been an individualist.(1) In primeval times our primitive ancestors were as crude, and almost as helpless as the lower animals. They had no control over the natural forces, and their productive capacity was not much above that of the animals. But living amongst many animal enemies it was imperative for primitive man to herd with his fellows for purposes of defence. Thus, from the beginning, man has only been able to develop individually by organising socially.

Human society begins when man, as distinguished from his animal ancestors, groups together in a semi-organised manner to make and to use tools. Mutual association is not, however, a purely human attribute. The social instinct is also present in the animal world.

It must not be assumed that mutual aid is brought about, as sentimentalists assume, because the units do not desire to fight or struggle. Mutual effort, like all forms of combination, is due in most cases to the desire to improve the conditions under which the struggle can be best waged. Just as certain animals can hunt best in the pack, just as birds organise to beat off the enemy, so primitive man was compelled to combine with his fellows in order to strengthen his capacity for struggling against animal enemies, and to co-ordinate his efforts in the great task of conquering Nature.

A tool according to Marx is a simple machine for concentrating energy on a given point. Many animals use branches of trees, stones, shells, etc., as tools. Thus man is not the only tool-using animal. The tools which animals use are fashioned by nature; those which man uses are made by him in a certain way for a definite purpose. Thus, while the animal uses the tool as provided by nature, man makes the tool for a particular labour process. The animal using the tool as made by nature "cannot rise beyond the means provided by nature." Man, by his conscious activity, makes the tool and uses it, and "opposes himself to nature as one of her own forces. By thus acting on the external world" and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature." He alone among the creatures of the earth is able to produce the means of production. Thus he creates the "vital spark" which separates him from the

animal kingdom. He sees clearly the line of his descent from the animals, but with his ability to produce tools he looks at his lowly ancestors as across a chasm. As tool-maker he founds the kingdom of Man — the social kingdom.

Prof. Lester Ward, criticising Spencer, emphasises the fact that the inventive faculty “has the chief place in sociology. It is the one that has produced nearly all the effects that distinguish man from the animal. But for it he could never have migrated and peopled the earth. It is the basis of all the arts. It underlies all discovery in science. It has accomplished the whole of what is called material civilisation.”

A great deal of confusion exists in the minds of certain writers in the Labour movement regarding the place of man in nature and in society. Engels summed up the point by showing that “we live not only in nature but in society, and this has its theory of development and its science no less than nature.”* It is the special function of the science of Sociology to study the development of man in society. The laws of society and nature are not identical. This is due to the fact that man, through the action of tools and his labour, gradually uses nature for social purposes. It is this conscious adaptation and improvement in the tool that differentiates man from the animal, and society from nature. Thus in the measure that man made new means of production, so in the same measure has humanity progressed. The influence of the tools — the economic basis of society — upon history has been admitted by the historians who have classified prehistoric times “to correspond with the materials from which their implements and weapons were made viz., into the stone, the bronze, and the iron ages.” In modern society the influence of the steam engine upon every phase of human life has been admitted by all modern thinkers. Prof. Bergson, in “Creative Evolution,” paid a glowing tribute to the steam engine which, he says, will serve to define the age for historians in the future.

No doubt it was the tree-dwelling habits of our brute ancestors that led to the use and making of tools. The grasping of branches and the climbing of trees; the swinging from bough to bough developed the fingers of the hands into prehensile organs — i.e., organs capable of grasping and holding things. With such hands, the forest-dwelling primitive man could become a toolmaker. With the power to produce tools, and the means of production, our

lowly ancestors could venture forth from the primeval forests and caves; with weapons specially adapted for hunting, they could boldly roam the plains and prairies, over mountains, and by river sides, subduing the animal world and conquering nature. With every extension in new labour-processes the activity of man expanded and his influence increased. Here is where the vast difference between the evolution of man and animal takes place. In the struggle for existence living organisms must adapt themselves to their environment in order to live and perpetuate their species. Accordingly living things must evolve organs to enable them to survive. Thus the deer develops organs of speed, and the lion strength; the birds evolve organs of flight — and the flowers perfume, colour, etc. But man, by the use of tools, can speedily make organs at will — tools — to enable him to survive in almost any environment. Unlike the animals, the new organs — the tools — are not part of his body. He can at will keep changing these tools, which is something impossible for the 'animal' to do. Hence man is not subject to the same laws as animals; the application of tools to nature brings forth new laws — social laws. To confuse social laws with natural laws ; to explain or interpret the evolution of society by the laws of Darwinism is to fall into the same fallacy as Prof. Hacckel did when he used biological arguments to reply to the sociological conclusions of scientific Socialism.*

To confuse biology and sociology, as Mr. Ramsay MacDonald has done, reveals a lack of knowledge regarding modern social science. Even a man like Walpole recognised that — “the history of humanity is written in its tools.” And Thomas Carlyle, who was by no means a keen student of sociology, was able to grasp the fact regarding the importance of tools over natural conditions. In a famous passage in “Sartor Resartus” he says — “Man is a tool-using animal. Weak in himself, and small of stature, he stands on a basis, at most for the flattest soled, of some half square foot, insecurely enough; he has to straddle out his legs lest the very wind supplants him. Feeblest of bipeds; three quintals are a crushing load for him; the steer of the meadow tosses him aloft like a waste rag. Nevertheless he can use tools, can make tools. With these the granite mountains melt into light dust before him; he kneads glowing iron as if it were soft paste; seas are his smooth highways;

winds and fires his unwearied steeds. Nowhere do we find him without tools; without tools he is nothing, with tools he is all." It is this fact regarding the overwhelming power of tools on human development, that strikes the keen student of social science. Tools are the most important factor in the history of the human race; they are the basis of all social life ; they are the basis of all real history; they bridged the chasm over which man passed in his march from the natural kingdom to the social kingdom.

It is an undisputed axiom of Sociology (the study of man in society) that society must change. Thus, the so-called "unchangeable East" has by its recently rapid development surprised many superficial observers. A glaring illustration of the point under discussion was when Mr. A. Balfour, in his lecture on "Decadence," told his audience that he did not include either Japan or China in the term "East"! The Russian revolution is a recent proof of the sociological truism that society is subject to the law of growth. Herbert Spencer, in attempting to emphasise social growth, assumed that society was an organism and was subject to the laws of organic life. But he also admitted^ that the intervention of social laws modified the growth of society as compared with biological evolution. We have already stated that owing to the making of tools society develops in accordance with its own laws. Hence a well-known writer and admiring critic of Spencer has accordingly restated and modified Spencer's theory by defining society as a "quasi-organism". Social evolution is determined in great measure by the ability of man to devise tools and use them to transform his natural environment. It is that power which places man on a higher plane than the animals. Among animals progress takes place within nature. The process cannot be hurried. New organs develop as a result of the struggle for existence, and progress only means the unfolding of these new and better adapted organs. But with the invention of tools, man is subject to new laws of progress, which are determined by his capacity to continue improving and multiplying these tools. Thus man is subject to an economic process — the development and improvement of tools — which exerts a most powerful stimulus upon human progress. There is no such stimulus in the animal kingdom. Hence biological laws cannot and do not explain the course of social evolution. With the

discovery of fire, by means of which primitive man transformed mechanical movement into heat, the human race made one of the greatest steps in social evolution. The animal cannot immediately add to its limbs, which are part of its organism; but man can make new organs at will by the production of new tools; and he can increase the productive capacity of such organs by improving these tools. When the tools reach a certain stage of perfection, animals are pressed into the service of man. At a later period he utilises natural forces, like wind and water, in his battle against nature, which he seeks to dominate. The development of the economic process is unlimited. It will be observed, therefore, how childish and ignorant are those writers who overlook the influence of the economic process upon the course of human history, and as the tools (e.g., machinery) become more gigantic and complex they exert an ever greater stimulus upon social growth.

It was the recognition of the important part played by tools upon social development that enabled Karl Marx and F. Engels to formulate their celebrated theory — the Materialistic Conception of History. These thinkers realised that the methods and conditions adopted by the human race to produce and exchange wealth, determined, in the last resort, the political, legal, intellectual, and other social institutions. To quote their own words: "The economic structure of society is the real basis on which the juridical and political superstructure is raised, ...in short, the mode of production determines the character of the social, political, and intellectual life generally."

Rise of Social Organisation

In grouping themselves together in a semi-organised manner to beat off enemies and to co-operate in the labour process, our primeval ancestors had to make another tool — a social organisation. The primitive pack in its most elementary form is based upon the differences of sex. In order to bind the members together it was necessary to have, in consequence of the discipline which association imposes, a directing administrative authority. The solution of this problem, according to Lewis Morgan, was one of the great tasks of the period of social evolution called Savagery.

Government is usually associated with despotism. The real meaning of the word is to control or direct. It is only with the rise of classes, due to private property, that government becomes synonymous with coercion. The economically dominant class in society is generally the class that controls the government in opposition to other classes; thus it comes about that the government in social systems based upon private property means despotism. Organised society means discipline. But social discipline need not mean tyranny. Daniel De Lean has clearly demonstrated that the master class throughout history has usurped and perverted the function of government. And Marx, in a neat illustration, has shown that organisation presupposes discipline but not necessarily coercion. He says: — “All combined labour on a large scale requires, more or less, a directing authority, in order to secure the harmonious working of the individual activities, and to perform the general functions that have their origin in the action of the combined organism...A single violin player is his own conductor, an orchestra requires a separate one.” The same law is applicable to society. The problem of primitive man was to organise the unit of social organisation so as to retain the mutual support of its members, and yet to bind them together in such a way that the individual could best exist by combining with his fellow-men. How this was accomplished brings us to the examination of the Gens or Clan.

The Gens

For a thorough comprehension of the gens or clan it is necessary to read Lewis Morgan’s famous book, “Ancient Society.” Regarding this remarkable work, which was rescued by the Marxian Socialists from the silent obscurity in which the “celebrated” European “intellectuals” would fain have let it rest, it is well to hear the testimony of a modern and distinguished scholar, Professor Jenks. He declares, in his “History of Politics,” that “Ancient Society’ will ultimately be recognised as one of the great scientific products of the Nineteenth Century.” Of no less importance is the “Origin of the Family,” by F. Engels, wherein the reader will find a concise statement of Morgan’s book written from the standpoint of the Materialistic Conception of History.

The gens or clan is the real starting-point of a consciously organised social association. From its crude and elementary beginning can be traced the germ of many later and important social institutions. The gens system can be traced in America and Greece, in India and Rome, and various other parts of the world. The word Gens is taken from a similar Greek word (genos) which means to beget. Its meaning is traceable in almost every language, and everywhere it signifies lineage or descent. It is similar to the Scotch clan and the Irish sept, both of which mean kinship. It will be seen, therefore, that the term is a universal one amongst various peoples in different parts of the world.

The Basis of the Gens

To primitive man the gens or clan, which is the unit of the tribe, is not only a social organisation for binding men together, it is also a Family, a Religious, an Industrial, and a Military organisation. Its fundamental basis rests on the fact that everything in the shape of the means of wealth production is communally owned and controlled. Everything, as Lafargue points out, is put into the common fund, vengeance included. Hence the blood feud between clans, with its eye for an eye, and tooth for a tooth. Many historians seem at a difficulty to explain in whom property was invested under this form of primitive communism. Where wealth is communally owned and controlled, property, in the modern sense, does not exist. Thus private property was inconceivable to primitive man. That also reveals how superficial are the economists who dare assert that capital has existed for all time. Capital, as Marx and Lassalle have demonstrated, presupposes the means of wealth production owned and controlled by a class which uses them to exploit another class owning nothing but its bodily and menial energy. The gens being an association for binding men together, it was necessary to have some method of organised control. Voluntary combination is only possible by the individual sinking his petty whims in order to retain the homogeneity of the group. Hence the election of a central directing authority whose work it was to control the affairs of the clan in the interests of all its members. This administrative body

was appointed by the common council of the clan, which was composed of every male and female member of the group. In the assembled council the directing authority was elected directly, and instructed from the rank and file of the members. The members elected to the various official positions could be instantly deposed by the gens calling together a general council meeting. This prevented any individual from becoming overbearing. The essential feature for us to grasp is that this form of government is in the hands of the members of the community, who control the social administration of society from below. Even those elected to direct, or administer, the affairs of the community had no power beyond that granted to them by the clan members. There were no permanent officials, and it was not a red tape affair carried on by bureaucratic "experts." "The greatest chief of the Redskins," says Volney, "cannot, even in the field of battle, strike or punish a warrior, and is obeyed by no child except his own." And Aristotle explains that the great Agamemnon, who had power to kill or punish anyone who ran away during the march against the enemy, had to meekly accept severe criticism and censure at the council of the tribe.

Within the clan, or gens, the bond of fellowship was intensely cultivated. This was not due to any inherent quality of the savage or barbarian. It arose as a consequence of the conditions upon which tribal society was based. The tribe was essentially a fighting organisation. To primitive man all strange objects inspired terror and fear. To anyone who was not a blood relation, who was a stranger outside the clan, the clansman had no moral obligations. All other tribes, were enemies or potential foes. It was this struggle for existence which compelled primitive man to form such fighting organisations. The clan could fight better than the individual, just as later the tribes were to federate because the federation could fight better than the single tribe against rapidly growing foes. Thus, as always, combination and mutual aid is sought as a means of intensifying the struggle. Ferocity to outsiders was a tribal virtue. The early warrior was as proud of the scalps at his belt as is the modern soldier who proudly carries his medals. In point of fact, the medals are only the lingering modified form of the vanquished foeman's skull. There is no contradiction between brotherhood within the tribe and ferocity to

outsiders. In modern times, love for one's country seems to reach its highest expression in hating some other country. The sheer need for unity compelled the clans to develop various means of unifying and binding its members. Its religion, customs, marriage system — all were methods tending to develop the fraternal spirit. But as we shall see later, the greatest factor which developed unity was the common ownership of the means of production.

Paul Lafargue observes in his "Evolution of Property": - "The brotherly sentiments of the Redskins,' says the Jesuit Charlevoix, 'are doubtless in part ascribable to the fact that the words mine and thine, these cold words, are all unknown as yet to the savages.'" And again he says, quoting the freethinker Lahontan — "Savages do not distinguish between mine and thine, for it may be affirmed that what belongs to the one belongs to the other."

In the primitive condition of the gens, the women voted side by side with the men. While the men attended the hunt, the women looked after the house and cooking. As each sex performed work necessary for the wellbeing of the community, there was sex equality. Thus, as Engels points out, at this early period in social evolution there was no "woman question," simply because there was true economic equality. We can easily see, therefore, that the woman question is essentially an economic one, and that its only solution lies in the direction of the economic forces being socially controlled by society. The woman question is part of the modern social problem, which, in its turn, can only be solved by the prohibition of class exploitation and social control of the means of life. The emancipation of woman is only possible side by side with the emancipation of man from the domination of class rule.

The gens was a true democracy, because it was based upon economic equality. All talk about modern democracy is nonsense when it is remembered that the greatest freedom is not the right to vote but the power to directly control the means of life. Economic freedom is the basis of all other liberties. Within the gens the fundamental interests of the community were identical, Hence the interest of one was the interest of all. All were members of one family and, indeed, all were blood relatives. There was no private property and no class had exceptional power through controlling the means whereby others lived. There were no class antagonisms because there were no classes.

This social system was not based upon force. It had no power of intimidating its members. There were no policemen, no crimes against property, no secret spies — none of the weapons of coercion upon which the modern civilised States depend to keep their citizens in order. There were no prisons because there were no social injustices perpetrated by arrogant property owners. Here, indeed, is historic proof of Locke's famous declaration, that — "Where there is no property there is no injustice, is a proposition as certain as any demonstration of Euclid; the idea of property being a right to a thing, and the idea to which the word injustice corresponds being the invasion or the violation of the right."

The greatest sin in the eyes of the clan was for a member to shed the blood of a brother clansman. All were kin, and to shed the blood of a member was sacrilege, and meant banishment. The greatest punishment known to primitive man was to be exiled from his clan. Outside of the gens was a world of foes; and he was alone. The clansman in his time realised the crass stupidity of the egotistical individualist who considers he "is a law unto himself." Exile was more terrible than death itself. It was adopted by the god of the Old Testament towards Adam and Eve, and it lingered on even into the days when proud Athens was Queen of the World. It is still adopted in modern times when "undesirable citizens" are outlawed or deported. Regarding the sacredness of the blood of the clan it is sometimes stated that the prevalence of human sacrifices seems to indicate that the clan did not look upon its blood with such sacred awe as has been suggested. But it is just these human offerings that prove the point. Primitive man lived in mortal terror of the spirits and forces of which he was ignorant. When anything terrible happened it was because some god had been offended or was hungry. Hunger was the great tragic fact ever haunting primitive man. The human sacrifice was adopted to propitiate the angry gods because it was assumed the anger was caused by hunger. As food was scarce human beings were offered. When slavery became general, slaves were sacrificed; during the pastoral period cattle were offered; and the sacrifice changed to fruits and cereals with the introduction of agriculture. The modern harvest festival, so popular in agricultural districts, with its lavish church decorations of the product

of the harvest, is a form of the primitive idea of sacrifice. To the country people the harvest is due to "mysterious forces." But in modern industrial society, where the mechanical forces are understood and are directly under human control, sacrifices cease. Besides, modern Capitalism realises that wealth may be exchanged and transformed into capital, hence the modern god is offered something which is economically valueless — prayers. In the beginning, however, the savage offers to the hungry gods the best he could offer — the blood of his kin. In the measure that knowledge gradually expands, the offering to the gods gradually contracts. Because primitive man knew least regarding the natural forces, his sacrifice was the greatest.

Justice

One of the functions of the Political State is the administration of justice. Many historians imagine that justice begins with the rise of the State. That is a grave error. For example, the goddess Justice is derived from Dike, which meant equal division, and is thus traceable back into the gens based upon communism. All disputes regarding individuals were settled by the common council of the clan, and justice was carried out in accordance with old customs handed down from the past. Some writers assume that the blood feud was extravagantly brutal, but it was a form of justice in keeping with the prevailing social conditions. Lafargue, commenting on this, says, in his "Social Studies" — "The human sources of the idea of justice are the passion for vengeance and the sentiment of equality."

"The passion of vengeance is one of the most ancient in the human mind. It has its roots in the instinct of self-preservation — in the necessity which impels the animal and man to resist when they receive a blow, and to respond to it mechanically if fear does not put them to flight. It is that blind and unreasoning necessity which leads the child and the man to strike the inanimate object which has wounded them. Reduced to its simplest and last expression, vengeance is the reflex movement analogous to the involuntary nervous action which makes the eye wink when it is threatened. . . . "The implacable and furious passion which is found in the souls of the savages

and barbarians of the old and new world, ...is imposed upon them by the conditions of the natural and social environment in which they move. . . . The members of a tribe consider themselves descended from a single ancestor.

The same blood flows in their veins. To shed the blood of one member is to shed the blood of the whole tribe. . . They put offences into the common fund like everything else; an injury done to one savage is resented by the whole clan as if it were personal to every member. . . . All its members consider it their duty to wreak vengeance. Vengeance is collective like property and marriage.” We see here the birth of the famous conception of justice — a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth — which permeates all the religions based upon ideals drawn from tribal society. Justice was administered by mankind for thousands of years before the State existed. At a later part of our investigation we shall show why the Political State took over the administration of justice.

The Growth of the Family

One of the most interesting of social studies is the evolution of the marriage institution. It has a direct relation to the dissolution of the gens and the rise of the Political State, and it is therefore necessary to say a few words here regarding it. We have already stated that the gens, in addition to being an industrial, religious, and social organisation, was primarily a family organisation. That these should be all more or less connected in ancient society, that they gradually separated from the simple forms of the past to the more elaborate and complex forms of the present, is a demonstration of Herbert Spencer’s law of progress regarding the transition from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, from the simple to the complex.

Here, again, in dealing with the growth of the family, and in particular by his careful investigations into the sexual evolution of the aboriginal tribes of America, the penetrating genius of Lewis Morgan rendered invaluable service to Social Science. Marriage, like every social institution, has developed and adapted itself to the changing economic structure of society. To thoroughly understand the evolution of the Family, it is necessary to study the classic

works on the subject - Morgan's "Ancient Society" and Engels' "Origin of the Family"; but for a detailed history of marriage in the past and present the famous book of Bebel's on "Woman under Socialism," is indispensable.

Marriage is, in the last analysis, the institution which attempts to regulate the sexual needs of the sexes. But with the advent of private property marriage has been used to perpetuate and facilitate the economic interests of man ; indeed, it may be said that, compared with the economic aspect of the question, the purely moral influence plays a minor part. We will refer to that later.

An organised marriage system was enforced upon primitive man by the conditions of the struggle for existence. Where unlimited and unchecked sexual intercourse was permitted, it caused inbreeding, due to the intimate relations that existed between parents and children and between brothers and sisters. Rapid physical degeneration was bound to follow. That was highly dangerous at a time when strength was a virtue, and when physical weakness meant extinction in the struggle for existence. The attempt to solve the question of sexual relations, says Morgan, "must be regarded as the results of great social movements worked out unconsciously through natural selection."

Consanguine Family

We cannot do better than follow Engels in his summary of Morgan's "Ancient Society," regarding the various steps made by the human family in the evolution of marriage. Engels says: — "The Consanguine Family is the step towards the family. Here the marriage groups are arranged by generations; all the grandfathers and grandmothers within a certain family are mutually husbands and wives; and equally their children, the fathers and mothers, whose children formed the third cycle of mutual mates." It will be observed that the special feature of the Consanguine Family is the prohibition of intercourse between parents and children. Its weakness, however, lay in the fact that it did not separate brothers and sisters. That was accomplished in the next step — the Punaluan Family.

The Gens

Under the gens the family reached the point where intercourse between brothers and sisters was prohibited. The gens grew out of the Punaluan Family. Within the gens marriage was forbidden between males and females of the same gens. Thus, the brother, in seeking a wife, had to go to another gens, the females of which were, collectively, his wives. Under this form of marriage all descent was traced through the mother. Whatever doubt there may have been regarding the male parent, the mother, at anyrate, knew her children. Bachofen, one of the earlier historians of the family, refers to the mother system of lineage as "Maternal Law"; but, as Engels points out, the technical and legal term "Law," is not appropriate, because there was no law in the juridic sense until the rise of private property. The most important point for us to note is that under the gens marriage system parentage is traced through the mother only, and her children belong to and are members of her gens; the father has thus little or no control of these children who are members of their mother's gens. It is necessary to emphasise this, because it was one of the causes of the greatest revolutions ever accomplished by the human race the transition from group marriage to the present form of monogamy (one man one wife), in consequence of the transition from communal property to private property.

Domestication of Animals

One of the most important events that led to the overthrow of tribal communism was the domestication of animals. Lewis Morgan, in "Homes and House Life of the American Aborigines," shows that primitive man was a hunter. Regarding the hunt, he says — "When the active pursuit of the herd commences, the hunters leave the dead animal in the track of the chase, to be appropriated by the first persons who come behind. This method of distribution is continued until all are supplied." But very often food is scarce. It is the insufficiency of food that compels the savage to eat prisoners of war. Many writers comment on the greediness of savages. They explain that after

a hunt the hunters, along with other members of the tribe, fall upon the prey and gorge themselves. Reckless gluttony, like most forms of human greed, is traceable to certain conditions. The hungry savages had no guarantee when and where further food was to be obtained, hence they ate what they could. All criticism against savage greed by modern well-fed and well-groomed writers seems humorous — because the savages had better reasons for gluttony than the members of the “superior races” who gorge themselves at the modern gargantuan banquets, which are indeed the resuscitated form of the hunt or war feast of the savages!

When better hunting weapons were invented it was possible for the savage hunter to add to his larder something in the shape of dried meat. Very often a herd would be captured, and many animals, especially the young, would be kept alive to be killed for food at some later and scarcer period. According to Prof. Jenks — “If the savage is reckless and greedy, he is often affectionate and playful. If he has had as much food as he can eat, he will amuse himself by playing with his captives instead of killing them. At first, no doubt, there is a good deal of the cat and the mouse in the relationship, but in time the savage comes positively to love his captives, and even to resist the pangs of hunger rather than kill them. In other words, the early domestic animals were pets, preserved not with a view to profit, but for sport or amusement. It is most important to notice that animals so selected would naturally be the handsomest and finest of the catch, whose appearance would delight the eye.” Thus the domestication of animals becomes possible only after a certain stage in the improvement of the weapon, or hunting tool, has been reached.

The same authority further says — “The art of training wild animals and making them serve the purposes of man, is one of the greatest discoveries of the world. Just as it is certain that there are some races, e.g. the Australians, who have never acquired it, so it is equally certain that many races have learnt it, with results of the greatest importance. But as to the man or men who introduced it, we have no knowledge, except through vague and obviously untrustworthy tradition. Like many of the greatest benefactors of the human race, they remain anonymous. In all probability, the discovery was made independently by many races under combinations of favourable

circumstances. But if we cannot speak with confidence of names and dates in the matter, we can make certain tolerably shrewd guesses as to the way in which the domestication of animals came about. We start with the fact that the most valuable of the world's domestic animals, the sheep, the horse, etc., are known to have existed in a wild state." These animals were chosen because of the assistance they rendered man in feeding, clothing, or carrying him. It is obvious why no attempt was made to domesticate the lion or tiger despite their great strength. And as the practical joker remarked, with more wisdom than humour, the hen was chosen in preference to the lark for purposes of domestication because the former could deliver the goods.

In the primitive period of social evolution there can be traced the factors which modified certain groups of the human family and gave rise to the so-called differences between races. A close scrutiny of human evolution proves that racial "differences" are at bottom due to the influence of social conditions. Prof. Jenks refers to the power of local material conditions upon human evolution. In dealing with the domestication of animals as a factor in the progress of certain races, he avers — "It follows, therefore, that the start which a pack of savages could obtain in the matter of domestication would depend upon the character of the wild animals in its neighbourhood. For it is fairly obvious by this time that many wild animals are not suitable for taming. . . . And so some peoples may have remained utterly savage, because of the fact that their country does not produce animals capable of domestication. Again, some races, like the Eskimos, appear to have had only the wild ancestors of the dog and the reindeer, and thus to have been very limited in their opportunities. Other races have been able to tame the sheep, one of the most valuable aids to civilisation; others, again, have had the still more valuable ox." Such simple facts as these are omitted by the pseudo-historians who attempt to explain social evolution due to "inborn characteristics" in certain races.

While it is true that the savage in the beginning only looked upon his young animal captives as playthings, and not as a source of exploitation, it is also true that the human mind gradually grasped the fact that in keeping what were pets, they were more profitable alive than dead. It is one of the peculiarities of

history that things turn out different to what was anticipated. Thus animals kept as playthings perform a very important part in the march of humanity. Because “the wool of the sheep, the hair of the goat, the milk of the cows would be to the savage like gifts from an unknown power. Still more, the young of his captives would add to his delight in his possessions, and his forest lore (observations of the habits of animals in their wild condition) would come in most useful for his new occupation as a breeder and keeper of flocks and herds. But when he had got thus far, the savage would have ceased to be a savage; he would have become a pastoralist.” - Thus the domestication of animals not only enabled primitive man to depend less on the hunt as a means of getting food, it was also an important factor in raising the human species from savagery to the more highly evolved social condition named Barbarism. This great forward step in social evolution is directly traceable to the guaranteeing of a better food supply. Moreover, the increased supply of food destroyed cannibalism. In this way changes in the means of producing wealth, changes in the economic conditions produce new moral habits. Thus it has been aptly said that — “Morality is the result, not the cause, of social amelioration.”

Agriculture

We have already noted that the domestication of animals makes man a pastoralist. As an illustration of the way in which economic evolution works, it is well to observe the connection between the domestication of animals and agriculture. The former leads directly to the latter. It becomes necessary to find pastures for the flocks. As the flocks become larger man is compelled to give up the nomadic — i.e., travelling — life and look for settlements suitable for pasturing the animals and for human habitation. Thus we see how the domestication of animals compels man to give up old habits of life and adopt new ones. With the settlement of the tribe in a fixed habitation, the feeding of the flocks and the maintenance of the inhabitants impels man to study the seasons and their influence upon vegetation. In the early days during the hunting period the earth seemed only a place to roam over. But the growing

social needs of the community led to a slow realisation of the fact that the earth was the great storehouse of humanity.

The origin of horticulture, which preceded agriculture, has been well outlined by Prof. Jenks: — “As in the case of the training of animals, so in the tilling of ground, we are left in the dark as to the benefactor who first made the priceless discovery. . . . But if we have no evidence on the subject, it is one on which we may fairly indulge in scientific speculation. Although the Australian aborigines know nothing of agriculture, they gather the seeds of a plant known as nardoo, and, after bruising them in a rude mortar, make them into cakes, Let us suppose, in some country endowed with greater natural wealth than Central Australia, that a pack of savages, having gathered a greater store of wild seeds than it could possibly consume, buried the surplus in some earth heap or mound, and left it in the summer camp till the returning spring. Suppose an unusually wet winter or an exceptionally early spring follows. Returning to its summer quarters, the pack might well discover that the stored-up grains had sprouted and assumed something like the shape with which they were familiar when they had gathered them in the forest the previous autumn. Such an object-lesson would hardly be lost, even on the savage mind. The same thing might well happen to the wild yams or other edible roots which are some of the earliest foods of man.”

With the continual expansion of population and the need for food for flocks, the barbarian would be compelled, as we have already noted, to seek some more efficient way of getting food than by roving from one part of the country to some other part. Agriculture is one of the last methods adopted by barbarian tribes in order to get food. That is due to the enormous labour and patience which it involves. It neither offers the excitement of the chase nor the leisure of the pastoralist shepherding the flocks. But in face of the growth of population, it was forced upon humanity.

In the early periods of history the land was, like everything else, held in common. It was tilled in common, and the harvest was communally divided by the head of the clan. At a later period the land was owned by the clan but used by the families within the clan. “The arable lands, hitherto cultivated in common by the entire clan, were divided into plots of different categories

according to the quality of the soil; these plots were formed into lots in such a way that each lot contained an equal portion of the different qualities of the soil; the lots were numbered to correspond with the number of families within the clan, and were thus divided. A portion of the land was held in reserve in anticipation of an increasing population.”

Regarding the equalitarian spirit which was developed within the early communistic societies, it should be noted that the early conception of Justice is directly traceable to the equal division of the clan lands among the members. In one of the cleverest books ever written to expound the Materialistic Conception of History, the writer (the brilliant Paul Lafargue) says, discussing the division of the communal lands: — “The stick which was used for measuring the length of the lines was sacred. The Egyptian hieroglyphics take for the symbol of Justice and Truth the cubit — that is to say, the unit of measure. What the cubit measured was just and true”; and again he says: — “For this reason the Greek word *orthos*, which at first means what is on a straight line, has the further meaning of that which is true, equitable, and just.” Nemesis, the great Greek goddess of retributive Justice, derives her name from the effect of these communistic agrarian divisions upon human thought. These early religious tribal customs prove how real was primitive Justice prior to the rise of the Political State.

The development of agriculture was one of the fundamental causes of the breaking down of the primitive method of communally-owned land. Better methods of culture demanded that, instead of the land being parcelled out annually between the different families, it should be used for three, five, or seven years by the same family. That would enable each family to put more detailed work into their plot than would be done were it to be returned to the clan at the expiration of the year. The period during which a family was permitted to use a portion of land imperceptibly extended until the users began to look upon the land as their own property. Gradually inequalities crept in. Some families were fortunate in getting hold of large plots, and others secured control of the more fertile parts. Jealousies due to these divisions were creeping in within the community. The old communal spirit was slowly being strangled. The clan was now no longer the unit of social

organisation and control; that function was gradually being assumed by individuals, by the heads of the families. "Landed property belonged to the fathers, hence patria (fatherland)....At that time a man possessed a patria and political rights only if he had a share in the land. As a consequence the fathers and males of the family alone were charged with the country's defence. . . . The progress of Capitalism consists in confiding the defence of the country to those who do not possess an inch of the land."

There is plenty of evidence to prove how afraid the members of the clan were that private property in land would arise and cause dissension amongst them and break up the glorious unity of the members which was the most distinguished feature of tribal communism. "If," says Lafargue, "it is true, according to the Latin poet, that fear gave birth to the gods, it is still more true that the gods were invented to inspire fear." Among the Greeks and Romans and all nations and races emerging from tribal society, it can be demonstrated that the function of the gods was primarily to defend the land against rapacious individuals who sought to transfer it from the communal control of the clan for their own individual aggrandisement. The boundary stone plays an important part in the religions of the period coinciding with the communal control of land cultivated by families. A brief study of folk lore reveals the great respect and reverential awe which the boundary stone inspired. Indeed it is at that period that we begin to meet Law in its most simple and elementary form. Law, historically considered, dates from the period when it was imperative for the community to define the attitude of the individual towards private property. Under primitive communism human conduct was defined by a series of customs; these dealt with such things as etiquette and morality, i.e., personal relations regarding individuals. But Law defines the relations of persons regarding private property. Thus Law has no function under communism wherein private property is non-existent. Law enforces its recognition upon society because it has behind it the property-holding class, which is generally the ruling class, backed up by the armed power of the political government.

In most religions in or about the period we are examining, the curses hurled at the head of the recreant who would remove a boundary stone are much

more severe than the anathemas flung at those who only disobey the gods.

Even to-day in many districts in Britain and in Europe may be witnessed ceremonies which are only intelligible when the importance of the boundary stone to tribal society is fully understood. These ceremonies take peculiar forms in different towns. But the central theme in all of them is either a procession or game in which the boundary stone is examined or defended; or a ball is introduced to represent the boundary stone, and a fierce tussle ensues between the combatants, the one set attempting to push the ball one way and the other set pushing it in the opposite direction.

While, therefore, the development of agriculture was undoubtedly making for the social progress of humanity, nevertheless the higher evolution of society towards private property was crushing out the fraternity of the clan in the same measure that it was developing the cruel passions and hatreds always associated with the private ownership of property. "There is nothing more false," says Kautsky, "than the idea that the social impulses are bound to be continually strengthened as society develops. - That indeed is unfortunately true. The development and growth of private property from its inception in barbarism to the present day has been one sequence of continuous strife. It has been the most vicious of all social institutions. The property-owning classes throughout history have used every organ of society to add to their power. The mental development of humanity has been such that it is now possible to realise what wonderful and miraculous powers lie dormant in the human race. In consequence, however, of the class nature of the control of property, every great mechanical and chemical advance has been utilised not to uplift humanity, but has been used to subjugate and intimidate the propertyless elements in society who dared rebel, or who in any way hampered the profitable expansion of property.

Origin of Private Property

We have already seen that one of the most important features of tribal society is that the means of life are communally owned and controlled. The growth of agriculture, however, led to the rise of family-owned strips of land. We

have also seen that the savage, in keeping a young animal playmate for his own enjoyment after all the wants of the tribe had been satisfied, seemed to do nothing extraordinary. No one could foresee how deep were the changes latent in such a simple act. It would seem quite natural to the savage to keep the young toys to himself instead of handing them over to the gens or clan. But as years passed the animals, through breeding, became numerous and automatically made additions to the personal property of the savage. And just as the demands of the flocks grew, so there increased the need for larger pastures and agricultural lands to feed them. In extending the territory of the tribe wars generally occurred with neighbouring tribes.

It is necessary to observe here that war from its inception has been based fundamentally on economic needs. The savage hunter fought to extend the hunting ground; the pastoralist for larger pastures and other flocks; the agriculturalist for fertile lands. The process continues until we reach modern Capitalism, wherein the capitalist class of the various nations fight to extend and control trade routes in order to secure an outlet for capital seeking profit. In the earlier periods wars were necessary evils in the development of humanity, because of the relative scarcity of food and other material things. But in modern society it is the sheer superfluity of wealth that is the driving force of capitalist militarism and international slaughter. But the cause in each case is economic, although emanating in each case from exactly opposite conditions.

When the savage conquered an enemy tribe, it was the custom to eat the captives. With the increase in the amount of food, made possible by the domestication of animals and the adoption of agriculture, the captives were spared and made prisoners. The rapidly increasing flocks required more and ever more labour; thus, instead of eating prisoners of war they were enslaved. Their labour was now productive and profitable. The slave could now produce more wealth than was necessary to maintain him. When eaten as the vanquished in battle he provided only a meal. When enslaved, his labour supplied his master with many meals. Thus slavery destroyed cannibalism because it was more profitable than the latter.

Progress

Progress is relative. Slavery is no doubt a dreadful tiling in the eyes of present-day philanthropists who run large factories on “welfare” (!) lines — and make splendid profits thereby. Engels cleverly replies to capitalistic cant regarding slavery. He says — “It is very easy to make preachments about slavery and to express our moral indignation at such a scandalous institution. Unfortunately the whole significance of this is that it merely says that these old institutions do not correspond with our present conditions and the sentiments engendered by these conditions. We do not, however, in this way explain how these institutions came into existence, why they came into existence, and the role which they have played in history. And when we enter upon this matter we are obliged to say in spite of all contradictions and accusations that the introduction of slavery under the conditions of that time was a great step forward.”

And likewise Mr. R. Paterson, in the “Nemesis of Nations,” says — “It was early in history that a grand dilemma was placed before mankind. Either men were to wander over the earth’s surface as individuals or in scattered families incapable of union, and rove, like the animals, to constant decimation. Doubtless in that case they might have enjoyed the wildest freedom, but it would have been the degraded and precarious freedom of animals. Humanity would have become a mere series of stagnant groups, or rather there would have been no humanity at all. On the other hand, the forces of cohesion might play their part; men might unite in order to cope with nature and to destroy or to tame the animals and to clear the earth for a human settlement. In that case freedom would certainly be restricted, and social subordination would become necessary. But subordination would be followed by insubordination, and there would begin that conflict of wills of which history is the actual record. Man made his choice wisely, but as soon as it was made problems were created which have not yet found their solution. A hierarchy of powers became forthwith visible, upper and under, stronger and weaker, ruler and ruled, victor and vanquished. Slavery was the first rude discipline which had become necessary if men were to be capable of holding the place already won

in the world. It is really doubtful whether the foundation of industry could have been laid in any other way.... It was the first frantic effort of the human race to organise itself."

Whatever may be the demerits of slavery, it was an advance on cannibalism. It may be a moot point for philosophic historians to discuss what is progress. Progress is essentially relative. The pessimistic Schopenhauer was hopelessly wrong when he contended that there is historic change, but no progress. Progress from the standpoint of social science does not mean happiness; it may even mean increased toil and intensified exploitation. Progress, since the rise of classes beginning with slavery, has been one-sided because the master class generally has reaped its benefits and enjoyed its fruits. Progress has brought few comforts to the slave, the serf, or the modern wageworker. "Each new advance in civilisation is at the same time an advance in inequality," says Engels. There is on record the admission of the negro that his condition as a "free" wage-earner was worse than when he was a chattel. Likewise, the Russian serfs suffered most cruelly after the "emancipation." The reason why progress is so contradictory in its results is due as Prof. Giddings has shown in his "Principles of Sociology" to the fact that — "Material and intellectual progress is not an unmixed good. Progress costs not only effort but suffering. Every discovery and every invention throws wage-earners out of enjoyment. Every development in social organisation break up long-established relations. The beneficiaries of new methods or new arrangements rarely suffer the distress that is caused by the destruction of the old order. . . . The cost of progress takes also the form of a moral and physiological degeneration, which is caused by excessive activity and the over-stimulation of ambition. The greater the rate of progress the heavier does th s cost become; the faster the march, the larger is the number of the exhausted who fall by the way. Progress, like every other form of motion in the universe, starts reaction against itself."

Despite all these things there has been progress, because, as Spencer has shown, progress is at bottom determined by the march from simple to more complex forms of society. Capitalism with its slums, starvation, and crime; with its statesmen and criminals; millionaires and wars, registers

the highest point in social evolution. While progress is thus an enigma to capitalist philosophers and historians, to the Marxian student the problem is comparatively simple. The contradictory aspects of progress are solved when it is realised that the whole course of painful social evolution has been blindly driving towards the conquest of nature by man. Measured in this way, Slavery, Feudalism, and Capitalism are necessary steps in the evolution of humanity towards that form of society wherein mankind will dominate and control the economic forces — Socialism; wherein, by the abolition of classes, the one-sided and contradictory nature of progress will be destroyed. Daniel de Leon, the gifted expounder of Marxism, sums up the problem thus — “The determining factor of social progress is the POSSIBILITY that a social stage offers for redress and for emancipation. . . . Whatever the reason, therefore, the law of social evolution is from the paternally both kind and cruel feudal system to the freedom of the Socialist Republic via the valley of the shadow of death of Capitalism.”

We see, therefore, that Capitalism is the highest point reached so far in human development, because it has brought the tools of production to the historic stage wherein they are socially operated, thereby making it possible for the working class to socially own and control them. The emancipation of the workers will mean the emancipation of the human race from all forms of economic exploitation. Every step towards the perfection of the socially produced and operated tool is the test by which the scientific Socialist measures progressive development. That is why progress is relative. Thus Marxism not only offers a method of criticising Capitalism and explaining history; it is at the same time a philosophy of social evolution.

Overthrow of Communal Family

We have already seen that the domestication of animals leads directly to slavery. With slaves attending to the increasing flocks private wealth was growing equally rapidly under the control of individuals who were as rapidly becoming wealthy. The growth of private property was the cause of the destruction of the gens group marriage system, and afterwards of the clan

itself.

In the subdivision of labour within the gens or clan, it was the function of the males to attend the hunt. Consequently the man who captured and afterwards domesticated the animals was by virtue of the ownership entailed, destined to become a property owner. The women attended more or less to the work in and about the house, and they did not share, therefore, in the wealth accumulating in the hands of the males. According to the gens form of marriage, as already stated, the men had to seek their wives in a different clan or gens from the one in which they were reared. Their children belonged to their wives' gens, and any property, such as the warrior's bow, etc., was returned to his mother's gens at death. Thus the male parent could not leave his property to the gens to which his children belonged; that property was claimed by his mother's gens, and was enjoyed by the children of his sisters. If, as no doubt happened, the husband had a favourite wife among the group of women to whom he was married, and if by such a wife he had children of whom he knew he was the father, according to the laws of tribal society his children could not enjoy his property after he died. The clash between communism and the desire to transmit private property ended in the overthrow of the matriarchal system and the inauguration of monogamy.

Here, indeed, was a serious conflict. It was a struggle between private property on the one hand and the clan form of marriage on the other hand. Thus was created the first of the many contradictions between common ownership and private ownership. The struggle was between two widely opposed methods of wealth control. And as communism was holding back the growth and evolution of the economic process, it had to give way, just as in modern society the individual ownership of wealth is in conflict with the methods of social production and is thus preventing the logical development of the social process which demands social control. And as primitive communism could not hold back the successful rise of private property in ancient society, neither will private property be able to hold back the triumphant establishment of social ownership.

The first revolution that overthrew the clan form of marriage throws a penetrating light on the historic role and function of revolution. All

revolutions are the solving of economic contradictions which develop in society from time to time. The conditions that produce revolution are present when the methods of distribution become a fetter upon the expanding methods of production. "The test of decadence in an industrial system is whether, instead of promoting production, its form becomes a hamper upon the productive potentialities of the everimproving industrial technique."

We see, therefore, why the clan family group had to be destroyed; and why even the clan based upon common ownership and distribution of wealth had to give way to enable the new, vigorous, industrial growth to develop which was at that period demanding the rise of private property. But, it may be asked, why did not primitive communism and the clan system yield peaceably to the demand of the new social order insisting upon private ownership? While social institutions arise to perform work that is socially necessary, these do not pass away when their functions have been fulfilled. Effete social institutions struggle to preserve their existence with the tenacity of a tiger. That is why they do not die peacefully and gradually fade away. They must be destroyed. And revolutions are necessary, because they destroy the old hide-bound institutions which stand in the way and refuse to permit new social processes to develop. That is the historic function of revolution. The modern venal lecturers and subsidised writers upon history sneer at the modern revolutionary movement of Labour because of its destructive aim.

It is the destructive role of revolutions that enables them to liberate new constructive forces. It is therefore no paradox to say that revolutions are fundamentally destructive in the measure that they are constructive.

Thus, under the clan system, the male property owners, in order to transmit their wealth to their children, had to destroy the gens marriage system in order to replace it with a form in which they had no doubt regarding the paternity of their children. That led to the establishment of the family organisation, in which descent was traced through the male parent. The step did not elevate woman as theologians and sentimentalists declare. It rather enslaved her. Another powerful economic factor that helped to destroy the gensmarriage institution was brought about by the desire of the males to enslave the women and their children in order to get labour to attend to the flocks. Such a form of

sex domination was impossible within the gens. Hence it had to be destroyed. By such means man became "lord and master." Hence Prof. Jenks, referring to the rise of monogamy, says — "By superficial writers, its appearance is often attributed to some vague improvement in morality or taste. Unhappily, the facts point to a much less exalted origin, viz., the desire of the man to secure for himself exclusively the labour of the woman and her offspring."

Not only were women crushed into a status of servility; enfeebled men were also enslaved. But it must not be assumed that the rise of inequality of the sexes was at bottom a question of sex. It was rather due to the conditions, which we have already indicated, by means of which property was vested in the hands of the males, that man dominated woman. It was a purely economic problem. Thus sex inequality is reduced to economic inequality. The true equality of the sexes can only be realised under the Socialist system of economic equality.

The new form of marriage made possible the rise of what was a contradiction within the communistic clan; the new marriage system, based upon private property, gave birth to the rise of wealthy families and poor families. Rich and poor in open conflict within a social organisation based upon communism was an anachronism.

With the growth of agriculture and the extension of the domestication of animals, new social needs arose and new labour processes and tools had to be devised. Every new departure in the economic process creates new problems; and these are only solved when it is found that other and even greater problems arise. It is this rapidly changing and progressive aspect of the economic process, the development of the tools, which exerts such a far-reaching influence on the course of human history. Geographical conditions also play an important part in social evolution. But the geographical environment is, historically speaking, constant, whereas the economic influence is a continuously changing magnitude. Thus when all due respect is paid to the power of the geographical factor, it must be recognised that the forward march of humanity can only be explained by the ever-changing nature of the economic process. It is, therefore, the expansion and intensification of the development of the tools which explains human

progress and social evolution. The Materialistic Conception of History embraces the geographical and the economic influences. And it, therefore, placed the study of society upon a scientific basis.

The development of agriculture and the growth of the domestication of animals demanded a greater subdivision of labour. As man emerged from the caves and forests and began to travel and live in the open, the housing and clothing of the clan became necessary. Agriculture enables man to live in a fixed habitation, and leads to the growth of the village. That explains why nomadic [i.e. wandering] tribes are seldom wealthy. Domestication of animals by providing the wool of the sheep and the hair of the goat, leads to the rise of weaving. Agriculture requires something stronger and harder than the sharpened stick, thus the iron plough replaced the wooden one. We can see, therefore, how manifold are the avenues of human activity. It is in consequence of the need for splitting and sub-dividing the labour-process that we trace the rise of arts and crafts. That the barbarian could wield tools with great skill is a point now beyond dispute. A visit to any museum will demonstrate that.

In the clan, artisans worked on behalf of the community. Their products were part of the communal wealth of the clan. But in the measure that lands and herds gradually drifted within the control of individual families, so in the same measure the craftsmen began to work privately for individuals and exchanged their products for those of their customers. By retaining these products the craftsmen began to accumulate private property. That tendency was facilitated by the fact that craft skill tended to concentrate within certain families, and thus arose family trade secrets which explains much regarding alleged hereditary skill. And as private property became influential, so the trades and crafts multiplied. Production was now carried on privately for the benefit of the family, and not communally for the clan.

The new social force was destroying kinship, the great bond of the clan, which considered the blood of its members sacred. The new social bond was private property. The old basis of the clan was communal production for common use; the new basis was private production for individual profit. The clan could not hold together these conflicting elements. And just as private

property destroyed the clan form of marriage, so now private property was vigorous enough to strangle the clan system. And as the overthrow of the clan marriage system enslaved women, so the overthrow of primitive communism by private property succeeded in enslaving man.

As though burdened with the curse of Nemesis, the symbol of retributive justice, private property not only controlled those whom its owners enslaved, it also dominated those who owned it. From that period onwards it forced man to build and create social institutions, not to safeguard or facilitate human progress but to protect and extend one thing only — Private Property.

The great historic fact — the transition from primitive communism to private ownership of property — must be disconcerting to the historians and philosophers who incessantly prate regarding the unchangeability of human nature. The one great thing that social science knows about human nature is that it does change. Undoubtedly human nature must have changed in the transition from communism to “individualism.” And human nature, confronted by new social needs and conditions, will change again.

It is also necessary to observe that tribal communism did not give way to private property because it was a “failure” and “unpractical.” No social system is “useless”; and systems are not superseded because they are “failures.” Systems of society, like institutions, do not arise as a result of mere personal whims, or by accident. Systems, institutions, and classes arise historically in obedience to social necessity and in order to perform definite functions. When these functions have been fulfilled, and the social needs which gave them birth no longer exist, it is then that systems, institutions, and classes, having no useful social purpose to serve, become fetters upon social evolution and have to be swept aside. Thus primitive communism was the best method of social organisation for thousands of years.

The slave states, Feudalism, and Capitalism have been as socially useful as they have been historically necessary, we have already shewn the need for slavery. Feudalism evolved social order, based upon militarism and agriculture, out of the chaos summed up in that period of anarchy called the dark ages. Feudalism formed the starting point for industrial Capitalism; but Feudalism became reactionary when it hampered the growth of the rapidly

rising Capitalism which sought to expand the miraculous potentialities of industry, by co-ordinating and socialising the labour-process which was destined to become international. Socialism is based upon the economic-technical triumphs and achievements developed within Capitalism. Capitalism itself is hampering the logical development of the social forces to which it gave birth. And as Capitalism had to destroy Feudalism to liberate the expansion of production, so, for the same reason, it is the historic mission of Socialism to destroy Capitalism in order that production may not, by its very productivity, strangle society. Social systems have their historic missions to perform; but having done their work, they become obstacles to further progress and have to be removed. The recognition of this scientific explanation of social evolution is one of the great contributions of Marxian Socialism to modern Social Science. Marx has summed up the points under discussion in his outline of social growth: — “No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces, for which there is room in it, have been developed; and new higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society.

Therefore, mankind always takes up only such problems as it can solve. . . . At a certain stage of their development the material forces of production in society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or — what is but a legal expression of the same thing — with the property relations within which they had been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution.” Thus social systems are overthrown by the antagonisms which they create. These antagonisms are economic and represent interests: these interests react upon men who combine as classes to fight to preserve or expand their interests. Hence the history of humanity is the conflict of wills and the struggle of classes.

The antagonism of economic interests, the clash of common ownership with the private ownership of wealth, destroyed tribal society. The clan was held together by the fact that the interests of the individual were inseparable from the common interests of all. That bond was further strengthened by kinship, because all members of the clan were blood related. But private

property with its marriage system introduced wealthy families within the clan; the interests of these families were put before the interests of the tribe; individual interests were first, the tribal interests were secondary.

Growing population and the rise of new wants increased productivity; and the exploitation of slave labour tended to create several surplus products. These surplus products form the early beginning of commerce. By various methods of barter the neighbouring tribes began to exchange the surplus products, and that brought them more into contact with each other and modified the old ferocity existing among tribes. But the exchange of products and the rise of commerce revolutionised the aim of the production of wealth. With the tribe the object of production was to satisfy the wants of the community, i.e., production was carried on for use to satisfy human wants. With the rise of commerce the aim of production was to exchange in order to realise a profit. When productivity aims at profit, from that moment commences the production of commodities, because a commodity is a product made for sale and profit; but that which is produced for use and not for profit is a product. The difference in the two aims of production were very far-reaching and greatly influenced the latter course of history. Within the tribe the wealth created was consumed by the members; the process was simple and could easily be controlled. The mode of production also held the members together because it was evident that the labour of the community and the wealth created by it was enjoyed in common; thus the interests of the wealth producers were centred within the tribe. But with the growth of production for profit the goods were generally sold outside of the tribe; profit came from the outside. The interest of the producer was bound up in the commodities sold to neighbouring tribes. Thus his interests were led directly away from the tribe. Barter gradually gives way to an improved method of exchange which is facilitated by the intervention of money. These conditions give rise to merchants whose appearance further complicates the process of production, exchange, and distribution. Engels graphically sums up the effect of production for profit upon the development of society — “The mode of production for exchange, not for home consumption, necessarily passes the products on from hand to hand. The producer gives his product

away in exchange. He does no longer know what becomes of it. With the advent of money and the trader, who steps in as a middleman between the producers, the process of the exchange becomes still more complicated. The fate of the product becomes ever more uncertain. The number of merchants is great, and one does not know what the other is doing. The products now pass not only from hand to hand, but also from market to market. The producers have lost the control of the aggregate production in their sphere of life, and the merchants have not yet acquired this control. Products and production become the victims of chance. But chance is only one pole of an interrelation, the other pole of which is necessity. In nature, where chance seems to reign also, we have long ago demonstrated the innate necessity and law that determines chance in every line. But what is true of nature is true also of society. Whenever a social function or a series of social processes become too powerful for the control of man, whenever they grow beyond the grasp of man and seem to be left to mere chance, then the peculiar and innate laws of such processes shape the course of chance with increased elementary necessity. Such laws also control the vicissitudes of production and exchange of commodities.

For the individual producer and exchanger these laws are often strange, and often unknown, forces, the nature of which must be laboriously investigated and maintained. These economic laws of production are modified by the different stages of this form of production. But generally speaking, the entire product of civilisation is dominated by these laws. To this day the product controls the producer. To this day the aggregate production of society is managed, not on a uniform plea, but by Mind laws that rule with elementary force and find their final expression in the storms of periodical commercial crises.”

Small wonder, then, that tribal society was unable to control the new antagonistic elements that had grown up within it. Not only had the wealthy families become more influential, they realised that their economic interests were not identical with the interests of their poorer fellow-tribesmen. On the other hand, the property-holding families had more community of interest with the wealthy families of other tribes. By the gradual linking up of

such interests among the various tribes, there was slowly accomplished the federation of tribes which is the basis of the nation. To this day many shires, the territory of the tribes, retain the names which were derived from the tribes that inhabited them.

But the unification of the tribes could not, and did not, solve the new problem thrust upon society. Commerce was rapidly developing, and it attracted to the various points where trade was carried on, many strangers who had no connection with any of the tribes. Instead of the tribe wherein all were blood relatives, we reach a stage where there is a hustling, bustling conglomeration of busy people who are all bent on their private business heedless of tribal ties and obligations. The rapid increase of private property controlled by a minority produced a majority of poor and property-less men, many of whom fell into debt, some ultimately being sold into slavery. The enslaving of the poorer tribesmen and the seizing of tribal property and all administrative positions by the rich provoked fierce conflicts within the tribe. The slaves, many of whom had recently been free men, were revolting. Within such a disordered community the wealthy families fully realised the dangers of these revolts of the property-less. They also knew their wealth was inciting the envy and jealousies of not far distant tribes who might declare war at any moment and attempt to carry away their riches. In face of these problems threatening their economic interests the wealthy families realised that tribal organisation had not devised methods to meet such circumstances. Their economic interests rivetted the rich together irrespective of clan or tribe. The pressure of opposing interests cemented them and produced something new in social evolution — a property-holding class bound together by property relations. But it also produced a property-less class.

These two opposing classes confronted each other. The property-less class based its demands on rights handed down from the past. The wealthy class, heedless of the past, armed itself to perform the tasks thrust upon it by new-born necessity. The property-less played the reactionary role. The wealthy were the revolutionaries. The conflict between the antagonistic elements was rapidly reducing society to anarchy. Private property had created chaos!

The propertied class set itself to produce order within society. Tribal

communism had no method of settling class disputes and conflicting interests. Tribal organisation was therefore useless. A new method had to be devised. The wealthy class thereupon organised a new social institution by which it was possible to crush out any section that challenged its power or revolted against its authority. That institution arose to maintain order within the community. By the power conferred upon it, that institution would defend the wealth of the community against foreign invaders; and would also defend the privileges of the master class against rebels within the community. Private property wrenched itself from tribal administration and founded its own institution of government — the Political State. It arose out of the anarchy caused by the class conflicts engendered by private property ; it arose to maintain order, but it was order enforced by the wealth-owners, the ruling class. It arose to preserve the privileges of property and to suppress the clamorous demands of the propertyless.

Many ruling classes throughout history have wielded the weapon of the State. In antiquity, the State was dominated by the slave-owner for the purpose of holding the slaves in check. The feudal State was the organ of the barons and the Crown, by means of which the serf and small farmers were dominated. The modern capitalist State is the tool of the capitalist exploiters for intimidating wage-workers. Throughout history the State has slightly changed its form, but its role as the weapon of despotism in the hands of the economically and politically dominant class has remained unchanged. It is able to enforce its will upon those who oppose it, because behind its demands it has the organised armed force of society.

The State, as we have seen, originated as a result of the growth of private property and the class struggles caused thereby; it is the weapon by means of which the subject class is held down; it is the weapon of class rule. Thus with the triumph of Socialism, with the overthrow of the system based upon private property and its fierce class conflicts, society will not need a weapon of social coercion, and the State, as Engels said, “will die out.”

REFERENCES

Only books are recommended which are really helpful and which the student can easily obtain.

1. History of MAN — Ratschel.
2. Ethics and the Materialistic Conception OF History — Kautsky
3. Capital — Marx
4. FUERBACH — Engels
5. Capital — Marx.
6. Principles of Sociology — H. Spencer
7. Evolution of States — J. M. Robertson
8. Capital — Marx.
9. Wage-Labour and Capital — Marx
10. What is Capital? — Lassalle
11. History of Politics — Jenks
12. History of Politics - Jenks
13. Evolution of Property — Lafargue . .
14. Social Studies — Lafargue
15. Evolution of Property — Lafargue.
16. Landmarks of Scientific Socialism — Engels
17. Puritanism — Meily
18. History of Politics — Jenks.
19. Critique of Political Economy — Marx
19. Origin of Family — Engels
20. Socialism: from Utopia to Science — Engels

2

ATHENS

I

In the preceding chapter we based our historical outline upon the conclusions and hypotheses arrived at by those authorities who have specially studied the evolution of man prior to the dawn of civilisation. With the rise of the State we reach political, and therefore civilised, society. From this point we come in contact with conditions which are the recorded facts of history.

Every race emerging from barbarism into civilisation carries with it remnants of the past. Thus one of the great difficulties confronting the historian of civilisation is to show why political society had to supersede tribal society. A great deal of trouble may be saved if the reader grasps two important facts, already explained, (1) That tribal organisation is based upon kinship. (2) That political society is organised upon a territorial and property basis. The transition from the one social form to the other was accompanied by a great crisis which can be clearly discerned at the beginning of civilisation in both Greece and Rome. The struggle culminated in the dissolution of tribal kinship and the triumph of private property.

Political, or civilised, society begins with fierce and embittered class antagonisms. Civilisation commences its march to the tune of the crack of the slave-driver's whip. It is wrong to assume that civilisation inaugurates

an era which marks the growth of new and noble social impulses. Social science defines civilisation as a stage in human evolution which is attained by those races that reach a certain point in economic development. The meaning of the word civilisation clearly demonstrates what we mean. Lewis Morgan, in "Ancient Society," shows that civilisation takes its name from the word city {civitas). The city presupposes an economic evolution which culminated in the need for a trading centre — to wit, the city.

It is admitted that the tribes which landed in Greece were organised upon the clan basis, and held their property in common. We cannot trace in detail how the wealthy class within the tribe usurped the various official positions. But we do know that centuries prior to the advent of Solon, the great Greek statesman, the propertied class had so managed to use its power that in or about 600 B.C. the conflict between rich and poor induced the nobles to adopt an attitude at once despotic and intolerable. Slavery increased, and the tribal lands passed into the hands of the aristocracy. In the previous chapter we drew attention to the far-reaching effects produced by the introduction of money into the tribal mode of society. This process has been graphically outlined by a well-known authority on the growth of the Greek Commonwealth. He says, dealing with the influence of money upon primitive communities: — "It was the most painful and degrading of all; for it came simply and without warning, and affected principally the most progressive of the Greek communities, and amongst them Athens. It is bound up with the greatest advances in material civilisation — the introduction of a metal currency. ... It was a simple change. But its effect upon the villager is as disastrous as the invention of the steam engine. It created a revolution in the Mediterranean communities. . . . We can watch it in Greece, in Palestine, and in Italy, and see the tempers of the sufferers reflected in Hesiod and Theognis, Amos and Hosea, and in the legends of early Rome. For consider what the change means in the life of a peasant living from hand to mouth on his yearly harvests. He used to take his stuff to market and exchange it for the goods he needed — wool for his wife to spin, children's shoes for the winter, or tiles to mend his roof; or he would pay the smith, or the joiner, for repairing his plough or his cart. But now most of them won't accept his corn and wine till he has turned it into

money. How much is it worth? He has not the least idea; for it depends on factors outside his range and which he has no means of controlling. He takes what the middle-man gives him; and the middleman makes a living on the commission. At the end of the first year he is alarmed to find he has not so much margin as usual. When the inevitable lean year comes he has no margin at all. In fact, he cannot see his way through the winter without help. His only resource is to borrow.

So he applies to the Big House (for the day of the professional Shylock is not yet). The Well Born, or Eupatrid (as the Athenians called him), is most accommodating. His heroic ancestors used to take their gold with them in the grave, in masks and such like. He is delighted to have found a better use for it. Certainly he will keep him through the winter. But, of course, he must be paid punctually next harvest. And he wants a little extra as well to make up for what he might have been doing with his money in the meantime — say, twenty per cent, for the six months. It is only fair, seeing the money, like seed, multiplies and bears fruit. The old ‘garlic-smelling Acharnean’ scratches his head. ‘Money breeding’ seems such an unnatural idea somehow.... So he agrees. One more detail before the transaction is concluded. Is he sure he can pay? The Eupatrid has his oath, but he wants some substantial security. . . . What has he to offer? Only his land and his labour. He had never thought of his land as his own; properly speaking, it belongs to the family.... So he consents, reluctantly, to make a bargain about his land. If he does not repay next spring, let the Eupatrid take it over; he will cultivate it as his tenant, and pay him a sixth of the produce as rent. Done. He goes away with his money, and the Eupatrid sets an eyesore of a pillar with letters on it in full view of the house. . . . For a time all goes well. Then comes a bad year, when expenses are heavy and he cannot pay his sixth. . . . So he makes another and still more humiliating bargain. Unless his rent is repaid (of course, with interest) by next spring, the whole of the produce of his labour shall henceforth belong to the Eupatrid. In other words, he will become his slave. And who will keep his family if the breadwinner is removed? The Eupatrid will keep them, provided they work for his wife and continue to give satisfaction.” The man is generally sold as a slave, because these dull and sour workers are potential

rebels. When the history of Greece begins, Attica is dotted with mortgage pillars showing the indebtedness of the families "owning" the soil to usurious members of the master class. Inability to pay debt meant slavery. Often the debtors were compelled to sell their children abroad as slaves. If that did not satisfy the usurers, the debtor himself was sold. "Such," says Engels, "was the pleasant dawn of civilisation among the people of Athens." Confronted with such a condition of social affairs the decaying clan system was helpless and could do nothing. In addition to this, the rapid growth of commerce had attracted many aliens to Athens who, while accumulating wealth, were not members of any of the local clans. The influence of the clan system upon such a medley of property relations and antagonisms was insignificant. Attempts were made to conciliate the opposing classes, but the conflict only became more extended and embittered. Something had to be done to maintain social "order," and to moderate the fierce class antagonisms which threatened to rend society. It was at this point that Solon, the "wise man" of Greece was approached to draw up a constitution. The aim of this marvellous man was to try and soften the lines of the class struggle. His achievement was a triumph in statecraft. In order to preserve the fundamental basis of the new conditions created by private property, Solon attempted to compromise the immediate demands of the oppressed by cancelling all mortgages and forbidding enslavement for debt. It is true many of the nobility evaded parts of the decrees enforced. In the main, however, the wealthy class was compelled to accept the concessions demanded by Solon in order to prevent a revolt which might have endangered the existence of private property. But Solon's legislation did not destroy slavery in Athens. The Athenians continued to enslave aliens and even Greeks from other parts of the Hellenic world. But the work of Solon created the great historic precedent that when society is endangered as a result of the rapacity of a property-owning master class, it is the duty of society to step in and adopt such measures as are socially necessary for its preservation. The statesmanship of Solon furnishes much sociological material for students of history. His work shows that all the great upheavals and social crises that have taken place in human evolution since the fall of primitive communism are directly traceable to class conflicts arising out of

property relations. Commenting upon this, Engels says — “Solon opened the series of political revolutions by an infringement on private property. . . . Ever since, all revolutions have been revolutions for the protection of one kind of property against another kind of property. They cannot protect one kind without violating another. In the great French revolution the feudal property was sacrificed for the sake of saving capitalist property. In Solon’s revolution the property of the creditors had to make concessions to the property of the debtors. . . . It is absolutely true that for 2500 years private property could only be protected by the violation of private property.” The knowledge of this famous historic generalisation by Engels will enable the student of history to solve many complex and obscure social problems.

Solon also divided the population into four classes. Social status was determined by the amount of property owned by an individual. Thus the first class was the wealthiest class, and the social position of the second and third classes was regulated according to property. But the fourth class had little or no property. Upon these property divisions a new constitution was erected. Political office could only be held by members of the three wealth-owning classes. As a sop to Cerberus the fourth class was permitted to speak and vote in the assembly and could nominate officials from any of the propertied classes. In order to strengthen the power of property, the class basis was also used to reorganise the military force. The first two classes furnished horsemen, the third served as infantry, but the fourth class — the propertyless ones, the potential rebels — were relegated to man the navy or served as light unarmoured infantry. We see, therefore, that the economic power of the wealthy gave them political control and their economic and political prestige placed the armed force of the community in their power. Having put this constitution into operation, Solon insisted that it should not be altered for a given number of years. He then left Athens and travelled for many years. One of the Greek historians naively suggests that Solon left Athens because had he stayed he might have been compelled to make alterations himself!

The work of Solon undoubtedly hampered the rapidly growing despotism of the landed aristocracy. But with the rapid expansion of trade a new class of despots arose in the wealthy merchants. The condition of the class struggle

was accordingly more complex, because in addition to the conflict between the landless peasantry and the landed proprietors, there was now a conflict between the merchants and the landowners. Moreover, the merchants, many of whom were aliens and had no rights of citizenship, also opposed the propertyless workers. Thus despite Solon's work the elements of strife had widened and deepened. The brief tyranny of Pisistratus did but modify the seething conflicts. Another attempt was made to reorganise the constitution by Kleisthenes (570 B.C.). It was Kleisthenes who practically shattered tribal society by his plan of organising the Athenian government upon a territorial basis — the form of government which has been adopted by all modern political States.

Kleisthenes split Attica into one hundred constituencies. Wealthy foreigners were naturalised. By way of compromising with the traditional form of tribal organisation, ten constituencies were called a tribe. Each tribe elected 50 council men to the council at Athens. The 500 members thus elected formed the State. In this second attempt at organising the constitution, we reach the stage where society is governed by legislators elected to represent a certain geographical area, viz., a constituency. The voters have a vote, not as a personal right but because they have a residence, i.e., property, in a given territorial unit. Lewis Morgan, dealing with this political innovation of the Athenians, says — "They substituted a series of territorial aggregates in the place of an ascending series of an aggregate of persons." Within the old clan system the social organisation was carried on by the persons assembled in the common council. The affairs of the community were directly administered by the common council. The only right necessary to qualify for a vote was that of blood membership. The clan system of social control was a method of administration which rested fundamentally in the hands of every member of the tribe. Thus it was social control from below. Political society, by splitting the community into constituencies wherein property holders elect representatives to a State council — the legislative machine which governs society — creates a form of government organised and controlled from above. It will readily be seen how great is the contrast between the former and the latter. Finally, our rapid survey of the growth of

the Athenian government demonstrates that the Political State grows directly out of the social conditions created by private property and the class struggles it engenders.

II

A great deal of discussion has gone on between historians regarding the merits and defects of democracy as a method of social organisation. Disputants on both sides seek to prove their case by taking the Athenian constitution as an example. We submit that there never was a democracy in Athens! The shallow historians who pervert historical facts in order to justify the continuance of class rule and private ownership of wealth, generally mean by freedom the right to participate in politics. But we, on the other hand, contend that the real test of freedom is control over the means of life — economic freedom. Economic freedom is the basis of all other liberties. We further submit that true democracy is impossible within any society wherein the economic forces are controlled by one class to the exclusion of all other members of the community. The greatest measure of freedom ever attained economically and politically by the human race was that enjoyed within the tribe under communal ownership. There true democracy existed because there was economic equality. A brief glance at the social conditions of Athens will illustrate our proposition.

Athens devised the most democratic constitution that political society has ever seen. But it was a social system based upon slavery. The free Athenians saw nothing inconsistent in passing laws to defend their freedom, and also putting laws into operation to protect slave dealers. The Athenian “Commonwealth” was a gigantic machine which enabled 90,000 citizens, women and children included, to dominate 365,000 slaves. It was a political device, by means of which a small minority of property holders dominated and exploited a majority of propertyless subjects, “living implements,” as Aristotle called them. The well-paid scribblers who try to identify the Athenian system with Socialism, by glossing over the slave basis of the “democracy,” are sore pressed indeed for a case against the modern movement

of Labour. It was not democracy that destroyed "the glory that was Greece." It was slave labour that made Athens the Queen of the Mediterranean Sea; made it the first city of the ancient world, with its treasures of art and culture. On the other hand, it was slave labour, coupled with the lust of empire, that caused the dissolution of that glorious city. We invite the thoughtful reader to examine the interplay of militarism and slavery as factors that sowed the seed of decadence in Athens by reading a brilliant study of the subject in R. Paterson's "Nemesis of Nations." The author is an avowed anti-Socialist; and it is to be regretted that he cannot bring his remarkable faculty for discerning the connection between economic forces and social institutions to bear upon the problems of modern society.

While it is a pleasant task to describe and praise the wonderful things that the Athenians accomplished, it is of more importance for us to examine the roots of human misery upon which all the Athenian magnificence rested. The great philosophers of Athens were unable to conceive of a social system without slavery. They knew that Homer had said "Zeus takes away half the manhood of a man when slavery overtakes him." They realised that slavery demoralised a man ; but these facts did not, as some writers point out, urge them to devise a new code of social tactics. Indeed, as can be easily explained, they were unable to alter the foundations of the slave system. For them, as for Plato, "a land of health amid fair sights and sounds" was for free men only. The attitude of the philosophers towards the slaves vindicates the generalisation of John Stuart Mill, that ruling classes never voluntarily offer to uplift the subject classes beneath them. Even if the philosophers had had that will, we as Marxists know that all the philosophy in Greece could not solve the problem of slavery confronting the Athenians. Hence we do not desire to censure them because of their attitude towards slavery. Great social problems cannot be solved by brains alone. Social problems, like great minds, are bound within the social and economic limitations of their time. We do not, however, belittle the intellectual genius of Plato and Aristotle because they were unable to formulate a policy to show the way out of the social rut into which the desire for property — with its wars and slaves — had landed Athens. Neither do we wish to denounce the Athenians for founding the

beauty and glory of their city upon the miseries of their fellow-creatures. To do so would be tantamount to accusing the Greeks for being what they were as a result of the development of the material forces. To reproach the Greeks because of the slave basis of their social edifice would be like reprimanding them, says Engels, "for not having steam engines and electric telegraphs." The philosophers, like Aristotle, rather attempted to explain than prophecy. Because the philosopher comes after practical development. Hence Hegel said that the wise owl Minerva — the goddess of wisdom — takes her flight in the evening after the events of the day. The slave theories of Aristotle, Plato, and the other great thinkers were the intellectual expression of clever apologists speaking on behalf of a slave-holding class. For, says Professor MacKenzie — "Political theories . . . are nearly always coloured by the circumstances and tendencies of the country and generation in which they are produced."

Without slavery there could have been no great intellectual development in Greece. The truth of this is demonstrated by the attitude of the intellectuals towards manual effort and labour. In the early days prior to the growth of the passion for property, when slaves were few and the work of the fields was carried on by the families of the clan, the poets sang the praises of labour and the gods deemed it virtuous. "The humblest services were considered to be no disgrace to princely persons or even to the gods. Paris was a shepherd; Andromache fed the horses of Hector with her own hand; Achilles carved at table; and Nausicaa, a king's daughter, went down to the brook to wash linen. So far from labour being a stigma, both Homer and Hesiod are never weary of praising it. In fact, Hesiod declares roundly that the gods abhor idlers." But between the age of Homer and Plato the Greek view of life had undergone a change equally as great as had taken place in the economic conditions. In fact, it was the economic development that changed the Greek's conception regarding mechanical work. It was Herodotus, that keen and observant historian, who said — "The Greeks hold the citizens who practised trade and their children in less repute than the rest, while they esteem as noble those who keep aloof from handicrafts." Professor Grant says — "A thoroughly self-respecting man could not harden his hands with the plough or the potter's wheel." Aristotle contends that no free citizen should be permitted to engage

in manual labour because it is degrading. The Greek word for unemployment is leisure. But, says Aristotle, quoting the property owners' proverb, "Leisure is not for slaves." Leisure was only for the masters. "Leisure is the mother of art and contemplation."

It may surprise many to know that there is such a close connection between economic conditions and intellectual development. Karl Marx long ago said — "That the mode of production of the physical means of life explains, as a rule, the development of the social, political, and intellectual life." Thus genius, like politics, has its economic foundation. Buckle placed this beyond dispute in a celebrated passage — "Wealth must accumulate before knowledge can begin. As long as every man is engaged in collecting the materials necessary for his own subsistence, there will be neither leisure nor taste for higher pursuits. No science can possibly be created, and the utmost that can be effected will be an attempt to economise labour by the continuance of such rude and imperfect instruments as even the most barbarous people are able to invent." Herbert Spencer, too, quotes with approval the following statement made by Professor Dana: — "How many of the various arts of civilised life could exist in a land where shells are the only cutting instruments; fresh water barely enough for household purposes; no streams, nor mountains, nor hills? How much of the poetry and literature of Europe would be intelligible to persons whose ideas had expanded only to the limits of a coral island, who had never conceived of a surface of land above half a mile in breadth — of a slope higher than a beach, or of a change in seasons beyond the variation in the prevalence of rain?" Professor Grant, referring to Greece, declares: — "Art and thought are both luxuries of life, and can only begin when the wants of the body have been satisfied. The free Greek need not devote all his time to these wants, because a slave class existed to do that for him. . . . But it was the source out of which came the eloquence and the philosophy of Greece. Without slavery, indeed, Greek civilisation is inconceivable. The climate of Greece, too, deserves a passing notice. It was not an accident that thought and art have their beginnings in warm climates. The first wants of life are there more easily provided, and the contact with the soil and the climate is not so engrossing." Mr. Zimmern, discussing the relative difference in wealth

in Greece and modern Europe, says: — “To this initial difference in material environment and possessions there naturally corresponds a difference in thoughts and feelings and imaginative outlook. Men who live differently think differently.”

We could easily multiply the above quotations from the writings of modern sociologists. We have dealt with the matter at length because it seems fashionable for certain emotional and rhetorical reformers in the Labour movement to sneer at the “economic necessity” of the Marxists. We are unable to understand why it is supposed to be mean and degrading to look facts squarely in the face and to admit that economic freedom — which includes all other freedoms — is the first aim of modern Socialism in its desire to emancipate humanity. We believe with a distinguished sociologist that “Men are proximately ruled by their passions or emotions; and the supremacy of the economic factor consists in its being, for the majority, the most permanent director or stimulant of feeling. Therefore, the great social rectification, if it ever come, must needs be economic.”

The above discussion is in no way a digression from our subject. We are able to better grasp how essential slavery was to the economic stability and intellectual continuity of Athens. It is our contention that the State exists to perpetuate the mode of exploitation which is in the best interests of the economically dominant class during any period. The aim of the Athenian State was to control the military machine in order to subdue and intimidate the slaves. Hence it is difficult to find any condemnation of slavery by any of the Athenian philosophers; but this, of course, is not to be wondered at, because the majority of them were slave owners. An educated master class confers few benefits on the class it exploits. Indeed, it is Aristotle who, in his “Economics,” suggests that masters should dangle freedom before the eyes of the slaves in order to make them work harder. This indeed must have been frequently done to intensify the amount of labour accomplished by the slaves. Many of the slaves had been free Greeks, and the desire for freedom must have been deeply rooted. The condition of many of these slaves enables the sociologist to refute the proposition of Sir Francis Galton, who argues that genius under any circumstances will assert itself. As many of these slaves

were Greeks, they possessed the same potentialities as their master, but they lacked the opportunities of mental development and remained uneducated. Why? Not because they were naturally inferior to their masters, as some writers claim, but because they belonged to a different social class. Even Aristotle refers to those who are slaves by nature. Now, if many of the slaves were servile, if many of them thought it only “natural” that they should be thus degraded and humiliated, what does that show but the principle that if a class is crushed, and brow-beaten; if it is treated like some dehumanised species — then such an environment will produce the deplorable conception among such contented slaves that a benevolent providence has fixed their status in society. In the opposite direction the feeling of power which the slave owners realise they possess over their less fortunate brethren develops that haughty and arrogant bearing which bespeaks the lord and master. It is in this way that the character of the different classes is determined.

The question of slavery undoubtedly fascinated Aristotle. In most of his social studies he returns again and again to the subject. While he spoke of those who are “by nature” slaves, he also replied to that generalisation by showing in his “Athenian Constitution” that the poor were, previous to Solon, “in absolute slavery to the rich” because “the whole land was in the hands of a few persons.” Thus proving that slavery was not a natural condition but the outcome of economic conditions. The breadth of his mind, was well shewn in his treatment of the question of poverty. Both Aristotle and Plato looked upon poverty as an evil. Plato, like all idealists, sought by eloquent flights of rhetoric to remove poverty. Aristotle, however, guided by the social facts of the period, based his solution of poverty upon an socio-economic foundation. He most clearly discerned that social problems were bound up in the development of the means of production. In a famous passage, he says — “If every tool, when summoned, or even of its own accord, could do the work that befits it, just as the creations of Daedalus moved of themselves, or the tripos of Hephaestos went of their own accord to their sacred work, if the weavers’ shuttles were to weave themselves, then there would be no need either for apprentices for the master workers, or of slaves for the lords.”

When examining the attitude adopted by Aristotle, and even Plato, towards

the social problem of their day, a very important fact must be borne in mind. Athens, in addition to being a slave State, was an imperialist and militarist power. The attitude of the ruling class towards the lower classes is summed up in the fact that the aristocracy took a solemn oath once a year to hate and injure them. Militarism, as always, flourished in the same measure that free speech, which means freedom of thought, was prohibited. The lustful yearning for empire on behalf of the Athenians made jingo mob law popular. The death of Socrates and the exile of Anaxagoras was the price paid for their outspokenness. It has been said that Aristotle and Plato were intimidated in consequence of this Athenian "Defence of the Realm Act," and that neither of these writers were as outspoken as they might have been under freer conditions. When, therefore, writers declaim regarding the glory of Athens and the wonderful genius of Plato and Aristotle, it is well for us to reflect and ask ourselves whether the Athenian militarist-slave State did not deprive the world of the real mental fruits of those wonderful thinkers. This applies to many other writers of the same period; and furnishes another argument regarding the loss to intellectual development due to the class and national strifes created within social systems based upon private property.

Military success brought many slaves to Athens. Even Socrates claimed it was perfectly right to enslave enemies. Thus within Athens there grew an expanding army of slaves who gradually deprived free men of their livelihood. Those unemployed wretches were the source of many agitations. During grave crises these propertyless workers set up a demand for a return to the old communism. Consequently Aristotle discusses communism and decides against it (which was the proper position then to adopt). Social problems are not solved by retrogression. Our modern reactionaries, forgetting that economic evolution has now reached the period prophesied by Aristotle when the tools "move of themselves," have the audacity to quote him as an authority against modern scientific Socialism. A melancholy fatalism dogged the steps of Athenian militarism. Indeed it was the principal factor which, by constantly adding to the number of slaves, ruined the small farmers who finding themselves dispossessed of their small estates cried out for a redistribution of the land. Thus Plato says — "When men who have

nothing, and are in want of food, show a disposition to follow their leaders on an attack upon the rich, these, who are the natural plagues of the State, are sent away by the statesmen in as friendly a spirit as possible; and this dismissal of them is euphemistically called a colony." Thus imperialism was the temporary solution for the problems created principally by imperialism. But the continual pressure of slavery upon free labour threw into the streets an ever-increasing army of property less workers who were a danger to the State. Under Pericles so serious became this problem that by means of small State jobs he provided a living for the destitute free labourers, who were gradually transformed into a band of parasites. In the same way, modern States seek to maintain, by means of the Civil Service, members of the middle class crushed out in the process of capitalist evolution. It is a sign of decadence when a State has to reinforce itself by maintaining an ever-growing army of parasites brought into existence by the development of its system. The ruling class, controlling the Athenian State, was compelled to adopt this measure in order to create a pillar of support against the slaves. Singularly this State-maintained mob was greatest at the period when the power of Athens reached its zenith. But as history so often demonstrates the summit of a State's achievement, and the day of its glory, may also be the period when the greatest activity takes place amongst the elements that bring about its decline and fall.

Imperialism brought wealth and slaves to Athens. Aristotle claimed that war was a means of acquisition; and Thucydides said the navy was organised for revenue and dominion. But Themistocles, who led the Greek fleet successfully against the Persians, saw the folly of Athen's mad greed for empire. He bluntly warned his countrymen of the danger into which they were drifting, and he was exiled for his outspokenness. The increasing number of slaves made them ever cheaper. Indeed, during a period, as Cavaignac notes, of rising prices, the only commodities which fell in price were the slaves. They became so cheap that they could be sent to the State-owned Laurion silver mines, where they were chained to their work and compelled to live in veritable black holes of human anguish. There most of the wealth was produced, which made the beauty and glory of Athens. But at what a cost of suffering on the part of the

slaves — “the simple, nameless herd of humanity”—as Euripides called them. Plutarch charges Nicias for being responsible for the death of numberless slave miners. It has been said that Nicias had a thousand slaves working in the Laurion mines, wherein the conditions of work were so awful that it has been estimated the average working life of the slave was no more than two years. Not only were the adult slave miners chained to their work, but even child slaves were made to work at the mines. Foremen, drawn from the ranks of the slaves, were appointed to see that the miners worked hard. Within Athens the slaves were held in check by slave policemen. Thus proving the historic law that enslaved classes are held in subjection by members of their own class who are employed and organised by the State. But the very splendour of Athens, based partly upon enforced imperial tribute wrung from other Greek States, made her the envy of other States. Just as the modern capitalist nations in their desire to extend their sway convert the world into an armed camp, so slavery, the basis of ancient civilisation, turned the various Greek States against each other. The time had arrived in social evolution when slavery, which had been at its inception a necessary and progressive step, had become a fetter upon further progress. The Athenians, unable to realise that militarism and slavery were undermining their great social edifice, added to the elements of decay by launching out on greater and more aggressive military expeditions. The growing propertyless mob cried out for leaders, and these the master class generously supplied. Many modern scholars stand aghast because the Athenian State did not try to find some remedy for the problems which were smashing it. The lesson which we must learn from the Athenian State is that its principal function was to keep its slaves in subjection. Anyone who challenged that was an enemy and traitor.

Athens betrayed her ally Plataea, which was only thirty miles away by refusing to send aid when attacked. But Athens subdued Miletus because it refused to pay a tribute. The imperialistic policy was never better defined than when the Athenian ambassador told the small power of Melos, which had been wantonly attacked, that “the strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must.” Melos was sacked. The men were put to death, and the women and children sold as slaves. A few months later Athens attacked

Sicily. There the Athenians were defeated, and many of them branded and compelled to work in the quarries as slaves; and among the Athenians thus enslaved and degraded was Nicias the notorious slave-owner who had so many slaves at the Laurion mines.

Thus the Greek States, in their efforts to get slaves, began to enslave each other. For the Peloponnesian war justified the stricture of Pericles, who admitted that the Athenians had become tyrants. The Athenians being tyrants at home towards their slaves were now, as the result of the misfortunes of war, so weakened that they latterly became the victims of tyrants themselves, and many of them were enslaved.

At a later period Greece became one of the many provinces of the Roman Empire.

REFERENCES

1. Greek Commonwealth — Zimmern.
2. Origin of Family — Engels.
3. Origin of Family — Engels.
4. Nemesis of Nations — Paterson.
5. Athens in the Age of Pericles — Grant.
6. Greek Commonwealth — Zimmern.
7. History of Civilisation — Buckle.
8. Principles of Sociology — Spencer.
9. Athens in the Age of Pericles — Grant.
10. Evolution of States — Robertson.
11. Nemesis of Nations — Paterson.

Note. — The best short outline of Greece is the history written by Prof. Bury.

3

ROME

The history of Rome begins, as the history of Greece began, by revealing grave social disorders. Private property relations had so far superseded the old tribal communism that the crisis which accompanies the transition from kinship to political society was being fought out.

In the westward trend of the hordes that swept over Europe, Italy acted as a sort of side street down which many tribes poured. Between these tribes a very fierce struggle took place. It was indeed the very intensity of the conflict between the various tribes in the Italian peninsula that determined the future military genius of the Romans. Many historians imagine that the Romans had some inborn magic quality which made them the conquerors of the world. The geographical position and the antagonisms between the tribes developed the military ability of the Romans.

No one denies that the Latin tribes evolved through primitive communism. The prevalence of the clan system was apparent long after tribal society had been overthrown. Engels says: — “Three hundred years after the foundation of Rome the gentile bands were still so strong that a patrician gens, the Fabians, could obtain permission from the Senate to undertake all by itself a war expedition against the neighbouring town of Veii.”² Morgan too quotes many instances in Roman events which show the lingering remnants of the clan system appearing in the manifold strands of Roman life.

The Romans found that private property had developed all the elements of

economic contradiction and social dissolution within the clan system. Similar conditions in Italy produced results identical to those already examined in Greece. The class struggle in Italy brought forward Servius Tullius, the Solon of Rome. Servius Tullius realised that the class antagonisms which accompany private property were threatening the stability of society. He thereupon proceeded to make a constitution. The constitution of the Romans is amazingly similar to the one created by the Greeks. The whole population, whether belonging to a tribe or not, was divided into six classes, and membership of each class was determined by the amount of property held by a person. Tims social status teas determined by property. The city was divided into four constituencies, each of which was called a tribe. These two points — the creation of propertied classes, and the splitting of the population into territorial areas — are the significant features of political society in contrast to the non-class system of tribal kinship. Servius Tullius, like Solon, placed the political and military power in the hands of the propertied classes. There were 193 votes, of which the first class had 98. Thus the first, or wealthiest, class, by uniting on any important point, had a distinct majority over the other classes. The remainder of the votes were distributed as follows: — The second class had 22, the third 20, the fourth 22, the fifth 30 — and the sixth, and poorest, class, for decency's sake was given 1 vote. All these votes totalled up did not amount to the power held by the first class. As the voting was organised upon a military basis, each class had to provide a centurion for each vote. Thus the economically dominant class controlled not only the political but the military power as well. The sixth class — the proletarians, or breeders — did not possess property, and accordingly were not asked to defend "their" fatherland. Whatever adverse criticism the wealthy Romans of the early period may be subjected to, one virtue, at least, they possessed— the valour and manhood to defend their property. At a later andmore shameless period we find a hypocritical smug-faced class of financiers hounding on a propertyless class to defend an empire which they neither owned nor controlled.

The political state in Rome was ably described by De Leon in the following outline: — "The wheels of the Roman political mechanism that concern us

were: —

The Consuls.

The Senate.

The Centuries.

The Colleges of Priests.

“You may wonder how the Colleges of Priests came to have a place in the machinery of government. We will come to that.

“Broadly using modern parlance, the Consuls represented the Executive, the Senate and Centuries the Legislative, the Colleges of Priests the Judicial Power.

“The Consuls were two; they were elected jointly and annually by popular vote, in the Forum.

“The Senate consisted theoretically of 300 members; they held office for life; vacancies were filled by the Consuls. The body partook of the character of a House of Lords, in that its legislative functions consisted mainly in passing upon measures ordered in the popular branch. The Senate sanctioned these or refused its sanction.

“The Centuries were military divisions of the people. Together, the Centuries constituted the whole people in ‘Committee of the Whole’ gathered at the Forum. They elected the elective officers, and enacted the laws, subject to the sanction of the Senate.

“Finally the Colleges of Priests. I said they represented the Judiciary. They did in this way: If a law or an election distasteful to the ruling class was forced through; if for any one of the thousand and one causes apt to arise wherever actual oligarchic power is draped in the drapery of democratic forms, the ruling class of Rome found it prudent to yield in Forum and Senate Hall; in such case the Colleges of Priests would conveniently discover some flaw in the auspices, some defect in the sacrifices. That annulled the election or the law as ‘condemned by the gods.’ The fact suggests another parallel, a parallel between what happens to-day in Organised Churchdom and what happened in Rome.”

The political machinery was thus in the hands of the ruling class. It is necessary to examine its work. Its function — in addition to keeping the

proletarians, or breeders, and the slaves in subjection — was to augment the wealth and lands of the Romans. Practically, by the term “Romans” is meant wealthy Romans. So in modern society, when we are told the wealth of the nation has increased, it really means that the wealth of the capitalist class has increased.

True to its militarist method of getting plunder, the wealthy class of Rome patronised the art of war and inculcated the kind of ethics as would best inspire valour and achieve discipline. The youth of Rome was exhorted to believe that the greatest and noblest duty for a citizen was to die for the state. Religion was identified with the glory of fighting. The great athletic games for the young were simply ingenious devices for fitting them for the battlefield. The wonderful monuments and triumphal arches were designed to keep alive the animal passion of pugnacity, that inheritance from our animal ancestors. Militarism was the trade of Rome. Thus the mode of getting wealth determined the various phases of social activity. We see the truth of this clearly reflected in the institutions and in the very words used by the Latins. Land and spear were symbols of possession, and were present during legal disputes. * The Latin word *mancipium* (property) means “that which has been taken by the hand”; it is also a word for slave.

We have now reached the period in social evolution at which private property may be won by usurpation and violence. Even to this day private property is only able to maintain its sway by the use of force and the threat of violence. We do not assert that force or violence can create wealth; but either may be used to wrench wealth from its owners or producers. The Latin word *opus* (work) became *opes* (riches). This shows that riches presuppose labour. Thus the Roman army could only get plunder after wealth had been created by labour. The greatest army in the world can only steal that which has been previously produced. Thus the seizure of trade routes, weapons, or raw materials are conditioned upon an advanced stage in the production and exchange of wealth. Marx proves this in reply to those who think that violence is a source of wealth. He says: — “Truly comical is M. Bastiat, who imagines that the ancient Greeks and Romans lived by plunder alone. But when people plunder for centuries there must be something at hand for them

to seize: the objects of plunder must be continually reproduced.* We draw attention to this because of the perplexing discussion at present going on regarding Force and Moral Persuasion as factors in human evolution. The great modern war has led many to assume that force is the greatest of all factors in human development. On the other hand, others contend that force can achieve nothing. Both are wrong. Social growth is explained by the unfolding of the economic process and by the class antagonisms created by it. In comparison with these influences both force and persuasion play incidental parts — i.e., they are subjective factors. Moral persuasion has never induced a dominant class to relinquish its economic prestige — a point emphasised by John Stuart Mill; and force has never successfully established a social system unless the economic process was sufficiently ripe. The empires of Alexander and Charlemagne are famous examples. Marx defined the role of force as the midwife of revolutions. Just as a midwife is only an accessory in the birth of a child, so force is only an instrument in the establishment of a new social system. Under Capitalism we have the greatest armies and fleets the world has ever known. But no one knows better than the militarist how much military organisation depends upon the labour process in the industrial establishments of the belligerent nations. Indeed, the jingoes contend that greater enemies even than the common foe are these workers who down tools and thereby stop the economic process. Thus the greatest advocates of the force theory unwittingly prove that the successful use of force is determined by the continuity of the labour process.*

The Romans, it must be admitted, looked to their army as a means of adding to the wealth of the State. This was possible after property had reached a certain stage of development. From this period private property in the hands of the dominant class after the rise of political society, is the result of either exploitation or spoliation. Marx's "Capital" explains many points in the past history of mankind. Commenting upon the rise of wealth in the hands of the property-owning classes, he says: — "Primitive accumulation plays in political economy about the same part as original sin in theology. In times long gone there were two sorts of people — one, the diligent, intelligent, and, above all, the frugal elite; the other, lazy rascals spending their substance,

and more, in riotous living. The legend of theological original sin tells us certainly how man came to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow; but the history of economic original sin reveals to us that there are people to whom this is by no means essential. Never mind! Thus it came to pass that the former sort accumulated wealth, and the latter sort nothing except their own skins. In actual history it is notorious that conquest, robbery, murder, briefly force, play the great part." The famous French sociologist, Prof. Letourneau, says regarding the same subject: — "According to a commonplace dear to economists, the first origin of private property was individual work.

Sociology, on the contrary, brings numerous proof to attest that private property of any degree of importance had its origin in violence and usurpation."^ We see the need of recognising the law laid down by Bluntschi in his examination of the State that "the speculations of political philosophy must be tested and supplemented by the actual history of mankind."

The history of Rome cannot be understood unless it is realised that the lands and wealth won by the army caused bitter conflicts within the various classes of the city. As the army added territory to the empire the class struggles and internal conflicts increased. The secret history of Rome, says Marx, "is the history of its landed property." This was also noted by Livy, the famous Roman historian, who said that a discussion on the land question always provoked great trouble. Many authorities in examining the Roman State draw attention to a mass of details which we cannot discuss. We may however sum up its function by declaring that it was used to dominate the land of the empire; to control the plunder of the army and to keep the proletarians and slaves in subjection. If these points are remembered the history of Rome offers no difficulties.

The internal history of Rome teems with the antagonisms and clash of class interests. Most of the historians of Rome testify to the swindling by the property owners who forcibly took over the public lands. Against an almost unanimous master class, backed up with the powers of the State, it was almost impossible to curb the arrogance with which it added to its economic prestige. The class struggle in the earlier period of Rome was fought out between the Patricians and the Plebs. The former represented the landed aristocracy,

who traced their descent from families within the old clans. These families usurped the official positions within the clan or tribe, and were called *patres* (fathers) — hence the patrician class. But there were many people in Rome unable to trace their lineage. These members of the community were called *plebs* — the multitude. Some of them were wealthy and some were not. The wealthy *plebs*, in consequence of their economic power, insisted on a share in the control of the government. Economic power ever demands political power. The rich *plebs* and the patricians dominated the State between them and thus kept in subjection the poorer *plebs*, the proletarians and the slaves.

In the class conflict between the *plebs* and the patricians, the former gained a few minor concessions, due to the need for their military services. Thus after a long struggle the Licinian law was only put into operation when the warlike Gauls threatened to capture the city. This law aimed at preventing the concentration of the land into the hands of a few patricians; it also sought to reduce the number of slaves upon the large estates, in order to find employment for freemen. It is remarkable that during the few years the Licinian law was applied that Roman agriculture flourished; and the number of small independent farmers increased. But with the withdrawal and defeat of the enemy the need for compromising with the *plebs* passed away, and the ruling class, strengthened with the spoil of foreign conquest, steadfastly refused to put the Licinian law into operation, and it rapidly fell into disuse. Consequently the crises in Rome, and the class struggle, became more intense than before. So embittered did the patricians become towards those who challenged their economic interest that they murdered the nobler members of their own class who attempted to promote “reforms.” Spurius Cassius was killed for proposing to distribute some of the lands among the less fortunate members of the Roman community. For exerting himself on behalf of debtors, the heroic Manlius was executed. Cataline shared a similar fate. Cneius Genucius was killed for attempting to expose corruption. The suggestion of Cassius, that the lands won from the Hernicans should be used for the landless warriors, was regarded as a crime. Such “crimes” as these were generally committed during times of “peace” when there was little need of the *plebs* to reinforce the army in order to extend the empire. It is one of

the fallacies exposed by history, that class antagonisms can be smothered by resorting to a false unity of classes during a period of war when the foreign enemy is endangering the safety of the nation. History confirms the view that after the alien peril has been overcome the clash of interests bursts forth with renewed activity. One of the most melancholy tragedies in Roman history is the story of the noble-minded Gracchi brothers who tried to assist their landless countrymen. They realised that the greed of the master class was undermining the stability of Roman society. Plutarch, in a famous passage, shows the conditions of the poorer plebs in Rome. He says — “The wild beasts of Italy have their caves to retire to, but the brave men who spill their blood in her cause have nothing but air and light. Without houses, without any settled habitations, they wander from place to place with their wives and children; and their generals do but mock them, when at the head of their armies they exhort their men to fight for their sepulchres and domestic gods; for among such numbers perhaps there is not a Roman who has an altar that belonged to his ancestors, or a sepulchre in which their ashes rest. The private soldiers fight and die, to advance the wealth and luxury of the great, and they are called masters of the world, while they have not a foot of ground in their possession.”

The Gracchi intervened in order to modify the system which automatically created swarms of landless and unemployed men, and was consequently moving to its collapse. The Gracchi movement was brutally crushed.*

We can thus see that the internal history of Rome pivots round the struggles between the various interests regarding the control of the lands within the city and the new lands that were being constantly added through the victories of the greatest military machine in ancient times. Small wonder Pliny stated that the greed of the great landowners was ruining Rome. Prior to the introduction of mercenaries, the small farmers formed the bulk of the army. Frequently they had to leave their harvests ungathered when they went forth to fight. On returning the successful warriors found that they were ruined, that they no longer possessed any land — although they had done their “bit” to extend the landed domain of the empire. While fighting to enlarge the “fatherland” they had been unable to defend their own little piece of land at home from

the robber band of patricians — the master class of their country. On the other hand, the landed nobility operated their large estates with slave labour. Thus when the proprietors were away at the wars their lands were tilled and cared for and their interests were safeguarded. Their motto during a war must have been “business as usual.” Through the wars, the operation of large estates and the extension of slave labour, the independent freemen were gradually relegated to the ranks of the propertyless proletariat. Many of the small farmers fell into debt. In accordance with the law of debt, a debtor was handed over to the creditor to work until the debt was paid. Thus the development of militarism was creating a large army of slaves and was throwing swarms of homeless and landless human beings on to the streets to starve. These men were dangerous, being ready to take part in any revolt against the master class. Conscious of this danger, the Roman State generally gave them something else to think about by drafting them into the army and sending them to march against some foreign race which threatened their “liberties,” their “lands,” and their “homes.” This is one of the favourite devices of States to protect the interests of the ruling class.

Roman militarism was mainly determined by the fact that Rome was not favourably situated for the development of trade. On the other hand, its central position in the Italian peninsula afforded it an exceptionally good strategical vantage ground that enabled it to expand its power over the other communities of Italy. The military genius of the Romans was not, as is generally supposed, a special inborn faculty, but was an acquired characteristic imposed upon them by the necessities of the material conditions. Military eulogists of Rome are fond of praising the wonderful list of conquests won by the armies of the eternal city. The extollers of Rome are blinded by a brilliant series of victories achieved by its armies when the Empire was at the height of its martial power. They forget the pregnant fact, emphasised by Polybius, that it took the Romans five hundred years to conquer the local tribes of Italy. Once, however, these were vanquished, the rest of the world was conquered in fifty years. The Romans were compelled, due to a rapidly expanding population on a soil not too fertile, to fight the neighbouring tribes. In the conflict with these virile Italian tribes the Romans learned the art of war. But,

as we have seen, the extension of territory, instead of adding to the security of the average Roman citizen, rather increased the power and arrogance of the dominant class. Thus, as very often happens, the needs of the community are generally exploited in the interests of the ruling class. In consequence of the rapid growth of wealth within the ranks of the property owners, side by side with an equally rapid growth of poverty within the other sections of the community, many revolts occurred. The plebs threatened to withdraw from the city. They were disgusted at the conditions prevailing there. The territory they had won by their arms and with their blood was parcelled out among the wealthy. Despite the fact that war is necessary at some periods in the evolution of humanity, the fact remains that the propertyless class do not reap the fruits of victory. The spoils are enjoyed by the masters. Side by side with the disappearance of the small farmers and the consequent swelling of the ranks of the propertyless proletariat — the breeders — an equally rapid growth in the extension of debt was prevalent. Not only were the debtors sold as slaves, but it is also stated “that if the enslavement of the debtor did not satisfy the creditors they had the power to cut the victim into pieces and divide the body amongst them. Sometimes debtors working off their debt to their creditors would be temporarily set free during a war and sent to fight for their country. When the war was over they were handed back to their creditors. The growth of a restless and rebellious crowd of propertyless men within the city no doubt led to the idea of enabling them to enlist as soldiers and sending them away on foreign expeditions. Lafargue mentions that probably the first wage slave, historically speaking, was the soldier, the name being derived from the coin the soldier received — *solidus*, from which is derived the word *soldat* (pay). The initiation of this mercenary army indicates that the merchants, as distinguished from the landlords, had great power within the State. By employing landless men as soldiers and offering them a share in the spoils of conquest, the Roman State had, at a stroke, devised a means of removing dangerous members of the community from the city. Moreover, by dangling military conquest in front of them it made them forget their troubles at home, and converted them into supporters of the State which they had previously rebelled against. This aspect of militarism in preserving

the rule of a dominant class is most important. Thus it has been well said regarding the imperialism of Rome: — “The new warlike triumphs in Spain and Southern Gaul illustrate the general principle that a ruling class or house may always reckon on checking domestic criticism and popular self-assertion by turning the animal energies of the people to strife with another nation.”[^] The recognition of this historic fact illustrates the Socialist contention that States use armies not only for attacking alien enemies but for rooting out rebellion at home.

The drafting of the propertyless into the army was only a palliative. The social conditions in Rome which produced the propertyless and hungry swarms had been left untouched. Not only did the social crisis reappear, but it manifested itself in a more acute form. The very conquests won by the proletarian army added to the number of slaves who displaced more and over more free workers. Thus the method adopted to reduce the number of the propertyless, by enrolling them in the army, ultimately added to the very number of the propertyless! The connection of militarism, slavery, and land, and their reaction upon the conditions of Rome explains her decline and fall. “In Rome the abuse of property in land and the abuse of property in slaves were the two most aggravated forms of her economic and social disease, and they were the chief factors in her ultimate catastrophe. Moreover, those two factors throughout her entire history worked closely together. It was the unnatural accumulation of property, and especially of agricultural property in private hands, that caused a demand for slave labour, which finds no parallel even in the history of Babylon.”[®] The failure to grasp these essential facts has confused many historians, who have overlooked the economy of Rome, and who therefore have overlooked the real reason why Rome collapsed. Slavery and imperialism produced the elements of dissolution in Rome, in Greece, in Babylon, and in the slave States. Similar causes in these different races and empires produced similar results — thus proving that races or nations do not progress or retrogress because of special inbred “racial qualities,” but in response to given material conditions. Property was aggregated in the hands of the few, and in the same ratio the propertyless became more numerous. Cicero admits that there were not two thousand wealth-owners in Rome.

Corruption was rampant in the State. All attempts to impeach the swindling governors were made abortive by their watchful colleagues and accomplices in the Senate. The keen manner in which critics were scented; the rapid methods adopted to silence and crush them by alert partisans, shows how well the swindlers and bureaucrats within all States stick to each other when their interests are endangered. Eternal vigilance is the price of corruption. But the officials of corrupt Rome were mere babies at their business as compared with the bureaucrats of modern States. The political conditions in Rome had become so immoral that the ruling class itself had to make some pretence to improve matters. Thus an attempt was made to take precautions regarding the buying and selling of political honours and positions within the administrative council, because the political ruling interests in Rome, as in modern nations, had their "secret funds." Historians seem surprised that within Rome there were no brave men who had the moral courage to expose the hollowness of the economic and political conditions, and to show the Romans how ill the Empire was faring. They forget that ruling classes, ancient and modern, holding the reins of government, and having command of all the forces of social coercion, possess the means of silencing criticism and destroying those who refuse to be silent. Rome, like modern States, had a marvellous system of spies and secret police. The State also had at its command hideous instruments of torture. All these things were maintained out of the plunder in the hands of the master class in order to reinforce the system that would provide further spoils. Rome did not lack men who had the moral courage to protest against the State. That such men have seldom been heard about is a wonderful testimony to the ability of the State in stifling its critics. The historic function of the State is to maintain the interests of the dominant class by any and every means. Thus the Roman State was an instrument controlled by tyrants for defending and perpetuating the exploitation of those who created and won wealth for the Empire. States maintain their power, however, by other means than the provocative method of sheer brutality. The better way, since it is the safer, is to try and pacify the discontented elements by buying over their leaders, and to make peaceful overtures to the rank and file by urging the

venal leaders to show how identical are the interests of all classes in the community. Thus when Caesar returned from his African triumphs he found the State providing 320,000 people with grants in the shape of doles, free corn, etc. Those fabulous experiments in State maintenance were not practised because the moneyed and wealthy class had any affection for the clamouring proletariat. The aim was to prevent the possibility of any rebel movement making headway against a State so bountiful in providing sops. That, indeed, is the social function of palliatives or reforms. This adroit and successful move of the Roman State tends to find favour among the most astute of modern imperialists. As the avowed function of this policy is to reinforce the status quo, it is surprising to find it supported by elements in the modern Labour movement. No doubt modern imperialists are aware that the subtle Roman State, by its policy of State maintenance and control, was able to transform a rebel force into a servile one, and the moderns would be only too pleased to do the same. The free grants of corn in Rome, made possible by the tributes levied upon the Empire's colonies, completely ruined the farming industry of Italy, which could not possibly sell corn in competition with the State which had access to the granaries of the world. Here is seen a peculiar fatality which may be observed throughout social evolution — that the very measure adopted to strengthen the stability of a decaying State becomes one of the means by which its destruction is finally ensured. The hungry and homeless mob in Rome had been produced mainly by the ruin of small farmers and independent workmen, and the State in trying to soothe them by free corn resorted to a plan which involved the inevitable ruin of the remaining small farmers. By thus increasing the number of the proletariat the evil was aggravated which the State was striving to palliate. Having exerted itself to feed the propertyless multitude, it also became necessary for the State to amuse it. States are thus driven to adopt any line of action that will prevent the discontented elements from ascertaining the cause of their poverty. The Roman State amused the hungry swarms by organising circuses and games — forerunners of the modern sensational yellow press. The military conditions of Rome produced an ethic that glorified valour and deeds of heroism. Hence the mob demanded heroic sights, deeds of valour, and plenty of blood-letting.

This explains the gladiatorial combats and the sacrifice of slaves and rebels to the wild beasts. The State encouraged these gory spectacles. While the proletariat were kept quiet with these brutal entertainments, the master class revelled in the luxuries derived from the plunder from the colonies and the products of the slaves. The decadence of Rome may be traced in the growing magnificence and the increasing number of the games and circuses. During the era of the Republic they lasted sixty-five days. At a later period, under Marcus Aurelius, they were extended to one hundred and thirty-five days; and when the decline of the Empire was imminent the games occupied one hundred and seventy-five days. Slaves ransacked the jungle for wild and ferocious beasts. Thus Rome that had produced brave warriors now compelled slaves to do the dangerous hunting. These captured animals, made even more fierce by confinement and starvation, were matched against each other. Small wonder that keen observers, like Tacitus, who lived in this degenerate age, confessed that Roman society was unsound. The decline of the Roman Empire took place long before the barbarian hordes overwhelmed it. But, like all doomed dominant classes, the only ones who failed to see the coming collapse were the Roman rulers.

In the history of literature, satirists are most numerous in an age when social contradictions are most glaring. The cynic is the literary expression of social decadence. Here again we note a close relationship between social conditions and the activity of genius. The satirist, however, may write without stinging the dominant class. If some authors live to write, it is also true that other authors write to live. Thus Horace, who pandered to the ruling class, was a more popular satirist than the honest and lei« tactful Juvenal, whose masterly criticisms of social types deprived him of that fame which his work deserved. The economics of genius is in part explained by the fact, that where the reward for brilliant work is under the control of a dominant class, the genius must either flatter or starve. Only the fearless dare tell the truth. This was neatly expressed by Juvenal, thus: — “But who shall dare this liberty to take, When, every word you hazard, life’s at stake.” But, on the other hand: — “Would’st thou to honour and preferments climb, Be bold in mischief, dare some mighty crime. On guilt’s broad base thy towering fortunes raise, For

virtue starves on universal praise.” The question of slavery was of the utmost importance to the Roman State because it was one of the chief sources of exploitation. We can only summarise the main facts.*

Slavery in Rome, as in Greece, was one of the motives of militarism. Likewise, as in Greece, it brought with it a series of conditions which in turn hastened the collapse of the State. The demoralisation of the slaves reacted on the haughty ruling class. Hence the brutal tortures that the slaves had to suffer. Slaves had not the status of human beings, and one of the Roman writers includes them amongst the animals required on an estate. Varro places the slaves on his list of agricultural implements. Being thus dehumanised, the slavelabourers came to look upon themselves as something far below the human species, and regarded their masters as though they were gods. A similar attitude is adopted by modern wage slaves who scoff at the Socialists’ proposal to remove masters, for the simple reason that these workers cannot imagine society without capitalists. Such is the mental and moral degradation that accompanies economic degradation. While most of the slaves in the Roman Empire were abject, many of the more intelligent amongst them revolted, despite the fact that the agitators had great difficulty in convincing their companions in misery that they were slaves. So inured do the enslaved become to their chains that they almost caress them and look upon them as something to be retained at all costs. Notwithstanding these obstacles there were many well-planned and disciplined revolts. Osborne Ward, in his “Ancient Lowly,” contends that marvellous organisations were created by the slaves to aid them in rebelling. Some of these revolts caused great uneasiness to the ruling class. In Spain (149 B.C.), under Viriathus, the slaves defeated the Roman army several times. The Sicilian slaves, led by Eunus, revolted (140 B.C.). In Southern Italy Spartacus organised a rebellion of slaves (74 B.C.). This revolt was very serious. The slaves thrashed the Roman army no less than ten times, and evaded the authorities for four years, after which the concentrated power of the centralised State crushed the rebels. These revolts were brutally battered down. The slaves were crucified in thousands. In the hour of their triumph the masters set fire to their crucified victims, and in the glare of these human torches indulged in

joyous orgies.

The great secret of the State in maintaining its supremacy over its slaves — and the method adopted in its foreign policy — are explained by Rome's famous motto "Divide et impera" (divide your enemies and so rule them). That is the watchword of States and ruling classes, ancient and modern. Gibbon, in the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," says it was suggested that the slaves should be made to wear a mark of degradation. The idea was not enforced because it might have shown the slaves how numerous and how strong they were — if organised. At the zenith of its power Gibbon calculates that the Empire ruled sixty million slaves. It was, therefore, necessary to adopt great caution in governing such a multitude. The masters assiduously cultivated methods of dividing the slaves against each other. Divide and conquer meant the continual subjection of the exploited. Thus skilled slaves looked with contempt upon those who were unskilled. Slaves of different races and nationalities worked side by side, and the Roman despots knew that the cursed racial and national hatreds would prevent the slaves from uniting in any enterprise, just as modern masters use the "foreigner" as a means of intimidating their rebellious as well as their patriotic wage slaves. Confusion was caused among the slaves by the medley of strange languages, and strife was further intensified by dividing the chattels into different grades. Moreover, the movements of the slaves were watched by spies drawn from their own ranks, who fabricated reports in order to win the gratitude of the masters. Slave policemen guarded slaves; and slave foremen saw to it that the slaves laboured incessantly on behalf of their owners. By such methods of dividing the slaves against themselves the master class kept their exploited chattels in check. Indeed, so subtle were the methods of using the strength of the slaves against themselves that it was the slaves who held the slaves in subjection. Right through history the alert ruling classes have found in the exploited classes their greatest allies in the perpetuation of exploitation.

With every new war and with every new addition to the number of the slaves their price dwindled and their condition became ever worse. They wore an identification brass plate to prevent escape, and the State saw to it that the roads were well guarded. Within the ranks of the slaves could be

found the finest talent in Rome. Many of the grandees had cultured slaves who wrote poems which their masters recited. In this way slave owners gained a reputation for culture at the expense of the talent of their slaves. The patricians and wealthy plebs — for the different orders tended to blend — paid scribes to prove that all the heroism, all the learning and genius in Rome were the class attributes of the wealthy. Thus at different historic periods the rulers have a Mallock whose servile function it is to praise their wonderful and well-nigh miraculous ability, with which, it is alleged, society would assuredly collapse. Unfortunately, such is the nature of man that the subject class actually believes it. But, what is even more remarkable, the masters, deluded by the praises of the Mallocks, actually believe they possess a god-like ability! Hence the pompous arrogance of the exploiters and the cringing servility of the enslaved. In Rome many industrial inventions were devised by slaves. We also know that the architects who designed the New Rome, after Nero's celebrated conflagration, were slaves. Eventually, so degraded became the condition of the slaves that Cicero seriously discusses whether during a shipwreck horses should not be saved before, or in preference to, slaves.

The advent of Christianity did not modify the general course of the decadence of Rome. Many writers argue that Christianity destroyed Rome, and others contend that Christianity improved it. What Christianity might have accomplished as a centre of revolt for the slaves and the rebellious propertyless swarms of Rome we cannot conjecture. We only know that for certain reasons the State, which did not persecute new religions or their worshippers, brutally attacked the Christians. According to writers like Kautsky, Osborne Ward, etc., Christianity in its earlier and purer form was an organisation of rebels determined to establish heaven, the ideal of their faith, on this earth. For almost three centuries the Roman State sought to crush the Christians and to drown them in their own blood. The persecutions only added to the growing popularity of the creed. The movement seemed to grow with the number of its martyrs. But appealing to a band of proselytes, many of whom could neither read nor write, many of whom were ignorant and superstitious, the Christian movement lacked clearness of aim and

definiteness of object. It thus contained elements of confusion. Eventually the trembling State, which had exhausted every method of ingenious brutality in attempting to crush Christianity, used its lack of clearness of purpose as a means of conquering it. The Roman State successfully wrecked Christianity by nationalising it — i.e., it was brought under State supervision and was thus controlled. Thus Christianity, the religion of rebellious slaves, became State Christianity, the weapon of the ruling class. This was accomplished under Constantine, who declared he had been converted, but who delayed his baptism so long that many clever and shrewd writers on religious history deny that he was ever really converted. The sudden perversion of Christianity by the State in order to wield it as a weapon to defend and strengthen the ruling class should make modern Socialists carefully reflect. It clearly demonstrates that no movement is stronger than its rank and file. If they do not clearly grasp the actual conditions against which they are organising; if the organisation is not scientifically poised regarding its aim and objects; if the methods, tactics, and function of the organisation are not thoroughly grasped— then such an organisation is inviting disaster at the hands of any modern Constantine who may use it to defeat the very purpose for which it was organised. This lesson should sink deep. The Roman State could not crush Christianity so long as the State stood clearly forth as the enemy. Slave Christianity, however, collapsed and was beaten when Constantine came to it as a friend.*

There are many who ask why it was that the Roman master class did not realise the numerous elements making for the destruction of the Empire, and why no attempt was made to launch some method of reinforcement in the way of “social reconstruction.” History gives a definite reply by recording the fact that no dominant class ever believes in any form of social reconstruction that tends to damage or diminish its interests in the slightest degree. Social reconstruction within any social system under the domination of the political State means the reconstruction of the power of the privileged class. The Roman ruling class did many things to strengthen the Empire. But it insisted on military plunder and the luxuries provided by slave labour. Beyond these things the masters could not see. Where slaves were freed to work on the large estates as *colonii*, or serfs, it was because the freer form of labour was

proving a more efficient method of exploitation.

No master class can ever see beyond its economic interests. For example, the basis of modern “welfare” undertakings is not social amelioration, but profit. Roman rulers were willing to do those things which would add to their pleasures, with the result that they only reproduced the elements of decadence. For instance, the elimination of the independent farmers and free handicraft workers undermined the industrial stability of Rome. Slave labour was so cheap that free labour could not compete with it. Ultimately the internal trade of Rome was ruined owing to the production of luxuries — on the large estates and in the workshops manned by slaves — at home for the grandees but not for exchange on foreign markets. The ruin of the home industries — the only basis upon which a sound social structure could have been established — was hastened by the importation of foreign wealth in the shape of military plunder. The economic paralysis produced moral degradation — a disease in the body politic which is always attributable to the same cause. The time had now come when Rome, in its defence, had to arm its slaves, and to rely on barbarian generals to wage her wars. Her military organisation was so degenerate that it could no longer produce eminent soldiers. Barbarians like Stilicho, Actius, Belisarius, and Narcis were called upon to defend Rome. Historians have tasked their brains to explain the peculiar disease that destroyed Rome. Their labour was in vain, for the decline and fall of this once mighty Empire was not due to any “peculiar disease” whatever. Like the other despotisms of the early Mediterranean civilisations, Rome based her economy upon the unstable foundation of military plunder and slavery. Inevitably the unstable foundation collapsed.

The day arrived when militarist Rome sought to fight, not for glory or gain — but for her very safety the virile barbarians overturned an Empire rotten to the core, the economic foundation of which had given way beforehand.

The closing scene casts a penetrating ray on the depths to which Rome had sunk. When the Roman soldiers sought their emperor to acquaint him with the awful fact that Rome had fallen, he was found in his gardens at Ravenna whiling away his time feeding peacocks!

Thus passed the empire city, which Livy had earlier called the Eternal.

REFERENCES

1. War and Peace— Ferris.
2. Origin of the Family — Engels.
3. Two Pages from Roman History — De Leon.
4. Nemesis of Nations— Paterson.
5. Capital — Marx.
6. Property, Its Origin and Development — Letourneau.
7. Capital — Marx.
8. Evolution of States — Robertson.
9. Nemesis of Nations — Paterson.
10. Ancient Lowly (2 Vols.) — Ward
11. Revolutionary Christianity — Milun.
12. No Compromise - Liebknecht

MIDDLE AGES

Rome, as we have already seen, collapsed internally before the barbarians overthrew it. Towards the end the empire had been nothing less than a glorious-looking facade. Despite the fact that the Roman State exercised great power and influence over the races and tribes under its domination, it nevertheless lacked the capacity for developing its colonies. It was not the aim of the Roman State to facilitate the industrial growth of its European units and thus pave the way for their transition into nations. Roman imperialism sought to levy tribute upon its colonies, and to tax them and gather imposts and tithes. In return the State was supposed to protect the inhabitants from the barbarian tribes then scouring Europe. But the more the Roman governors (placed in the provinces to gather the taxes for the State) became arrogant and blackmailers, and the Roman soldiers became tyrannical and overbearing, the more the people looked upon the barbarians, against whom they were “protected,” as deliverers. The barbarians, however, did not prove to be better taskmasters than the Romans had been. We also saw that the decadence of Rome was in part traceable to slavery. With the demoralisation of the slaves towards the end of the empire, and with the social paralysis which enervated the slave owners, slave labour gradually became uneconomical. The great estates which had been worked with slave labour slowly fell into disuse and were gradually disintegrated. It was found better and more efficient to split up the estates into small lots and place the slaves upon them who were sold with the land.

Thus the slaves, although tied to the soil, had a small measure of freedom, and were called *colonii*. The *colonii*, or serfs, received one-sixth, or one-ninth, of the product of their labour. Thus the slow collapse of slavery was not due to any Christian influences, but was the direct outcome of economic causes. Slavery, says Engels, passed away because it no longer paid. The slaves became comparatively free because serfdom yielded a greater ratio of profit. We shall see that the Roman *colonii* were very similar to the serfs under Feudalism.

The Dark Ages is that period in European history which stretches from the fall of Rome to the rise of the feudal system. It is a period in social evolution during which war was universal and unrestrained. If the rule of the sword can accomplish anything of lasting value to humanity, then the Dark Ages should be conspicuous for notable social institutions. We find, however, that the energies of the tribes were directed against each other, that industrial development was paralysed, and that intellectual activity ceased. No wonder historians called this turbulent epoch the age of darkness! The mode of production having been checked, there was a general absence of progressive social growth. Whether the orthodox historians are aware of it or not, they, by referring to the period as the "Dark Ages," admit that the Marxian Socialist conception of history is the correct method for interpreting the evolution of society.

In one or two parts of Italy, where those who fled from Rome were able to continue the industrial process, there slowly emerged the better-known commercial cities. It was in the Italian cities where the economic process was renewed that art and genius flourished. Here again we note the connection between industrial development and its reaction upon other spheres of human achievement. But even the Italian cities were dangerously weakened by the curse of empire which retarded their development.

Historic Mission of Feudalism

The map of Europe during the Dark Ages fails to indicate any of the modern great nations. We recommend this point to those superficial observers who attempt to explain the history of modern Europe in the terms of “national qualities” or “characteristics.” When the animal pugnacities had slightly calmed down, an attempt was made at sane social organisation. Considering that agriculture was the most important industry, and that Europe teemed with hostile armed camps, it is not surprising that such conditions produced a social system with an agricultural-militarist basis. Feudalism, in fact, is simply militarism organised upon a basis of landed tenure. Thus it has been well said that “to pursue agriculture one must occupy land; to rule agriculturists, one must rule them through the land. Feudalism expressed itself through land-holding; it was a military service with land as the reward of service.” The social function of Feudalism was to find a permanent agricultural area for the tribes which scoured Europe. The dissolution of the Roman Empire, as we have already noted, was partly due to the unprofitable use of slave labour. Hence it was necessary for society to work out some method by which the slaves could be transformed into profitable agriculturists. They were transformed into serfs. There is, therefore, nothing mysterious regarding the origin of Feudalism. The rhetorical historians who refuse to look beneath the surface of things, who write bulky volumes extolling battles and the glory of war, who have chronicled the lives of a few warriors — these “drum and trumpet” historians, as J. R. Green so aptly described them, have been unable to grasp the social need for the system of Feudalism.

Feudalism had other root which fed it. The swarming peoples who roved over Europe were organised in tribes. In an earlier part of this work we examined the formation of the clan and gens. At the period we are now discussing the tribes in Europe had reached the pastoral stage and were settling down to the practice of agriculture. The increase of population made it imperative that more effective methods of procuring food should be adopted. It has been said regarding the factors that make for social progress: — “One of the greatest of these secrets has been the fact, now commonly

known as to seem self-evident, that the same piece of land, if properly treated, will go on producing during an endless succession of seasons a rotation of crops. The whole of modern civilisation turns upon this fact. But for its recognition, society, industry, politics, as we understand them, could not exist. "By the adoption of the two-field system, and then the three-field system, of intensive agriculture, the villagers were able to increase the output of food. The relative merits of these methods of agriculture were much discussed questions in the Middle Ages.

The Village Community

The tribes, after settling in agricultural villages, carried on the administrative work of the community in a democratic manner. Most of the equalitarian and communal customs of the clan were preserved. The work of administration was carried on by officials appointed by the "folkmoet," an assembly that embraced all members of the tribe. The land was communally owned, but to facilitate the agricultural process it was divided into strips and allotted to the families in the village settlements.

Regarding the origin of the village community, a regular battle has been waged between two historical schools. The one school contends that the land was originally held by freemen, and the other school asserts that originally the cultivators were slaves. The latter advocates seem afraid that they may provide historical material for "platform orators." Even Prof. Jenks in his two books, which are indispensable to all students of the State, warns his readers that he is not supplying data to Socialists.*

The school represented by Fustel De Coulanges and Prof. Ashley deny that the village community was originally composed of free kinsmen. They adopt what has been called the theory of progressive amelioration, which looks upon social progress as a state of things — "Where Freedom slowly broadens down from precedent to precedent."

The worst of this historical conception, as an S.L.P.-er once wittily remarked, is that the "freedom" process has got stuck somewhere within the capitalist system! Paul Lafargue in his reply to Prof. Huxley clearly

shows the universal nature of primitive communism with respect to land. One of the greatest difficulties which has never been explained away by the “progressive amelioration” theorists is the universal method found in early agricultural communities of dividing the land of the village into strips, in accordance with the varying fertility of the soil in different parts of the district. This uneconomical method of land cultivation is easily explained by those who believe in early common ownership of land. The primitive community divided the land in the most equitable manner because all members were equal. On the other hand, the strip method of cultivation cannot be explained upon the assumption that the primitive cultivators were slaves. Agricultural authorities like Marshall, and other keen observers like Sir Walter Scott, testify to the primitive common ownership of land. As Engels points out, the question is no longer whether land was once held collectively by the tribe or not, but what was the form of collective ownership.

Origin of Warrior Caste

The barbaric tribesmen had been hunters and warriors before they settled down to agriculture. The old warlike instinct was only maintained by the men joining in marauding expeditions. The most warlike members of the community were elected, together with a war chief, to protect those who tilled the soil. In the beginning, the chief was only supreme during the fight or the foraging expedition, and once back in the village he had no more authority than anyone else. If the war chief had exceptional ability as a warrior he was generally appointed the leader of the war bands, not only of his own clan or tribe, but of adjacent tribes. Hengist and Horsa were such war chiefs. The war bands maintained themselves by organising plundering expeditions. The spoil was divided equally among the warriors. Thus at a later date William the Norman, before the battle of Hastings, appealed to his warriors to be brave and to fight valiantly, because if they defeated the enemy the land and riches of England would be divided amongst them. Sometimes the war bands hired themselves, like soldiers of fortune, to anyone who would pay them well for their services. Thus Pope Innocent had to promise to divide the plunder

among the soldiers whom he had ordered to “crusade” against the Christian Albigenses. The same “spiritual” motive inspired the soldiers of Christ, who formed the “holy” army that pillaged, robbed, and sacked Christian towns in the “crusades” against Jerusalem. The clan warriors of Scotland had a great reputation in Europe. Even Douglas, when journeying to Palestine to bury the heart of Robert Bruce, was urged by the Spaniards to help them against the Moors. Thus while some of the clansmen were warriors the majority of them became agriculturists. Agriculture demands close attention, and it becomes increasingly difficult for those who practise it to rush off heedlessly to wars. Hence most of the members of the clan slowly lost the hunter’s fierceness and the soldier’s daring. The change in their character is directly traceable to the change in their mode of producing the means of life— from hunting to the cultivation of land. Those who decided to remain warriors to protect the community in those warlike days performed necessary work, in the subdivision of labour within the community, by defending the folk and lands against external foes. Thus agriculture, while enabling men to live pacific lives, compels others to devote all their time to soldiering. These warriors were maintained by the community; but they organised private expeditions of their own which provided them with booty. Just as the different crafts tended to centralise in the hands of certain families (a point already examined), so the same families generally provided the warriors. Consequently there arose, almost imperceptibly, a warrior or military caste within the tribe. In view of the phenomenal conditions of chronic warfare then prevailing, it is difficult to see how any other development could have taken place. Because, as we have seen, the warrior bands grew out of the complexity of society, in consequence of the subdivision of labour. The professional soldier thus becomes socially necessary. This truth is realised by Prof. Ingram, who says: — “The decisive prevalence of peaceful activity was indicated by the rise of the institution of paid armies — at first temporary, afterwards permanent — which prevented the interruption or dislocation of labour by devoting a determinate minority of the population to martial operations and exercises.” But the growth of a military class amongst the freemen of the tribe was fraught with grave consequences. Just as the warriors were supplied from certain

families, so in course of time the chiefs were supplied from the same family. As the war band became more explicitly the fighting force of the community, the lust of power made the chief's family strive to retain that office. It thus tended to become hereditary. The warrior families gradually usurped the other official posts within the tribal council, which became ever more a military council. With rampant warfare all around, the chief and the military leaders realised the power of armed force. The division of the plunder won in the marauding expeditions among the warriors made them wealthier than their agriculturist colleagues. Hence the fighters were accumulating private property and becoming wealthy. Then, as the community extended its well-tilled land, it became an object of envy in the eyes of local tribes. To safeguard against possible attack it was necessary to fortify the settlement. This was done by the chief demanding that the members of the community should help to build the fortifications, or, in lieu of labour, to furnish a tribute. Here we see the beginning of services being commuted for a levy. A well-known writer further suggests that as the fortifications not only protected the persons and the property of those within the village, but also acted as a defence for those living adjacent to it, these, too, were levied for its upkeep. With this revenue the chief was able to maintain a band of men paid to serve him, and not the community. Having behind him this armed force, the chief had the power to impose his will upon those outside the community. Moreover, such is the greed for power, such is the infallible abuse of power, that the chief finally imposed his will upon his own tribe or clan. He still guaranteed to defend the village and the surrounding district against other warrior bands, but in return he now demanded tribute for himself and his fighters. He relegated to himself, as chief, the administration of the affairs of the community; he levied tribute — the forerunner of taxes; and he sat as judge and interpreted the immemorial customs — the beginning of Law and "Justice." Naturally the democratic villagers resented the dominance of the military usurper. The real history of the early Middle Ages is the struggle between village democracy and military usurpation. The revolts of the folk against the chief added a new function to his long list of offices — that of maintaining order within the community by the power of armed force. This new relation of the chief to

the villagers contains all the fundamental elements of Feudalism. Indeed the power of the chief forms the basis of the Feudal State.

Rise of King and Barons

In this way the communal villages, based upon equality, became subjected to military power. The wars and conquests and universal militarism of the Middle Ages crushed the freedom of the villagers. From these conditions emerged the military chief and his armed warriors. By usurping all the functions within the community, due to their wealth and armed power, they stood forth as the ruling class. The chief was chosen for his military prowess because in an age of fighting physical strength becomes the principal virtue and valour the test of genius. Thus every age produces its own conception of virtue and genius. Within the community the best strategical position became the centre which was fortified, and around which the principal buildings were situated, and to which the villagers flocked when they were attacked by an external enemy. Here all the administrative work of the clan was done. Instead of the village hall being the "moot" or "folk" hall, it became the court of the chief. The interests of the chief and the warriors are now no longer identical with the interests of the folk. It is the aim of the chief and his propertied men of arms to exact tribute. In the struggles between races and tribes, which form so much of the history of the Middle Ages, it is very difficult to trace in detail, step by step, the process by which the chiefs gradually assumed the position of principal war leader. But we do know that when the first disturbances quieted down the war leader had usurped the powers above outlined. He is indeed not so much a chief as a petty king. We know that the ruling class of Feudalism was developed within the vortex of the militarist orgy, where everything was tested and measured by the sword. This may lie demonstrated by tracing the names and titles of the feudal ruling class to the arts of war. Thus king means chief, or leader of tribe in war, and is taken from the Teutonic word "cyning"; the German word for king (konig) comes from the same source. Likewise baron, the feudal lord, in the Romance languages meant a strong man or doughty warrior.

Vassal meant brave; valiant or noble meant landed proprietor, and had no connection with either conscience or honour; villein meant member of the lowest class, and although the individual might possess all the qualities and virtues, the noble lacked, he was a villain because he did not own land. It is interesting to note this method of recording class hatred in the very names applied to the disinherited throughout the ages. Commenting on this, an original writer says:— “The characteristics of grudge and resentment cling to the words, and have preserved them until now, although the status which they signified has long since vanished with the changing form of society Words themselves handed on from mouth to mouth are bearers of history, perhaps more indelibly, more unconsciously true than any parchments or graven stones.”^ An eminent publicist also observes: — “An immeasurable amount of moral history is conveyed in the simple fact that ‘slave’ was always a term of abuse; that ‘villain’ is just ‘villein’; that ‘caitiff’ is just ‘captive’; and that ‘churl’ is just ‘ceorl.’ So the ‘neif’ (neif — native) becomes the knave, the scullion the blackguard, and the homeless wanderer the vagabond The ‘rogue’ has doubtless a similar descent, and ‘rogue’ and ‘peasant slave’ in Tudor times, when slavery had ceased, stood for all things contemptible. Men degrade and impoverish their fellows, and out of the fact of deprivation make their worst aspersions — never asking who or what it is that thus turns human beings into scullions, churls, blackguards, knaves, caitiffs, rogues, and villains.” Hence economic dependence means social degradation and humiliation, and becomes one of the means of subduing a subject class by depriving its members of moral status and courage — thus leading the enslaved to think that they are less than men, and need masters to govern them.

The Feudal State

The rise of a king and a baron class, holding private property, created an intense conflict within the clans and tribes. All were equal no longer. The ever-hungry militarist class, due to its power, filched the tribal lands. Despite its power, however, the villagers managed to secure and maintain certain rights. But in the main the interests of the ruling class were in direct opposition to

the interests of the villagers. Kinship no longer was the great binding force of men conducting their affairs upon a basis of equality. Blood relationship ceased to be the unifying force of the social organisation. The king and his warrior colleagues now conduct the affairs of society and dominate whom they can. The tribal land — the shire — becomes the domain of the king — his kingdom. It becomes the territorial area governed by a military class, which, through the king's council, becomes the feudal State. In this way, once again, we see the kinship method of social organisation replaced by the political or territorial system controlled by a ruling class of property holders. The feudal State rises by crushing out the clan. Mankind, as Lewis Morgan has shewn, has developed but two forms of social administration. In the first period government dealt with persons through their relationship of kinship within the tribe or gens; in the later period government dealt with persons through their relationship to territory. The conclusions of Morgan have been accepted by modern sociologists. It is true, as Prof. Giddings suggests, that even the tribe had a territorial area; but Morgan's point is that the tribal land was never the basis of government. Even Prof. Giddings, however, endorses the scientific and historically correct position of Morgan by admitting: — "At one time the mere administrative basis of government was gentile relationship: the mere administrative basis of government now is territory." The internal politics of the early Middle Ages is nothing but the struggle between clan and State. The rise of the feudal State is evidence of the defeat of the clan system and the triumph of private property. Thus it has been said: — "The appearance of the State, combined, no doubt, with economic influences, accomplished the final evolution of property. The result of the policy may be said to have been twofold. It created a landlord class, and it dissolved the village community." The chief functions of the State were: — (1) the defence of the kingdom against the external enemy; (2) the preservation of law and order within the kingdom - the king's peace; (3) the dispensing of justice and the administration of Law, The clan system, however, carried on the work of social administration without the aid of the Political State. Several of the social functions of the State were developed within the old tribal community, thus demonstrating that the State has not always been the

medium of social administration. On the contrary the State by its very nature being the engine of class rule, and having behind it the armed power of the kingdom, has usurped the function of social administration and has become the instrument by which the organisation of society becomes the means of preserving intact the material interests of the dominant class. The State does not and cannot administer on behalf of society. Nominally it administers in the name of society, but in reality it only seeks to preserve the domination of the master class of any period. It is quite true the State performs functions of a social nature which seem to react on every class in the community. It is, however, compelled to undertake these duties in order to concentrate all administrative work in its hands, and in order to cloak its essentially class character. Just in the same way the Church, which is supposed to attend solely to our spiritual needs, is only able to maintain its prestige by attending principally to secular affairs, such as birth ceremonies, marriages, and funeral services. These services have been grabbed at by the Church as a means for gripping men and women and controlling them in the sphere of religion. With the same object in view, the Roman Catholic Church during the Middle Ages, when its power was at its zenith, controlled secular education; it sought to enrol those who might prove dangerous to its supremacy; and it interested itself in art and literature. It was, moreover, the greatest landlord in the western world. Thus it was compelled to attend to these secular and material things in order to maintain its spiritual teaching. In the same way the State, in order to preserve the interests of the class whose executive it is, has been compelled to undertake various social duties so that it may appear that it is accomplishing the work of society, instead of really preserving class rule. The class nature of the State is clearly revealed when we remember that the State means status quo. All who are against it are put in the false position of being against society, whereas they may only be rebelling against the ruling class. It is because the State has been compelled to assume several social functions, in order to hide its essentially class nature, that distinguished "intellectuals" in the modern Labour movement have, as a result of superficial observation, regarded it as the equivalent of society.

We have already drawn attention to the fact that the ruling class under

Feudalism derives its different names and titles from terms which originate in war. We have also noted that the feudal State was erected upon elements evolved within tribal society. Before tribal society was destroyed, the chief and the military caste had already usurped and controlled in their interest the various administrative functions of the tribe. Under Feudalism these functions, in the hands of the propertied class, became the means whereby the clans and tribes were finally stamped out. Herein we observe an historical law summed up by Marx: — “That every new social system develops its embryo within the womb of the old system.” “The truth of this famous generalisation is forced upon us when it is understood that attempts were made in the Middle Ages to create feudal States and Empires by energetic and brilliant men, but, lacking the organic stability of those States which rose out of the evolution of the tribe — as above outlined — they collapsed. We have here a pregnant lesson for the modern working-class movement — viz., that the forces for the construction of the future Industrial Republic must be consciously organised within Capitalism by the revolutionary movement.

The quarrels between the kinglets in England prior to the Norman Conquest were the conflicts of tribal war chiefs, or war leaders, who had become local kings. The Anglo-Saxon armies which overran England were leagues of clans, and Hengist and Horsa were war leaders. In the same way Clovis was a war chief, who afterwards became a king. Thus we are able to trace the rise of the king and his council of warriors — the basis of the feudal State — (as we traced their names) to the rise of a propertied class relying upon armed force to enforce its will and protect its interests. Prof. Jenks sums this up by stating: — “The origin of the State, or Political Society, is to be found in the development of the art of warfare. It may be very sad that this should be so; but it is unquestionably true. Historically speaking, there is not the slightest difficulty in proving that all political communities of the modern type owe their existence to successful warfare.” He also shows that the character of the Political State is essentially territorial. And whosoever lived — nay, whosoever happened to be within the dominion was its subject, and bound to obey its Laws. The contrast between the Political State and the tribal society once again presents itself. Tribal communism based upon kinship was

a system of administration which was controlled during the early Middle Ages by the people themselves discussing and settling their affairs in the “folkmoor.” Hence it was society organised and controlled from below. Territorial society — i.e., Political society, based upon the class ownership of private property, treats the propertyless class as subjects, and governs them as such. The State is the sovereign power in the community, and enforces the will of the ruling class due to its control of the armed forces of society. Political society is therefore distinguished from tribal society by being social organisation from above. Many writers seek to show differences between the city States of Greece and Rome and the national States of feudal Europe. Whatever minor differences existed — and there were differences — lose their prominence in face of the central fact that the function of the State in antiquity, in the Middle Ages, and in modern Capitalism, is to rule and govern the subject and exploited classes. The Ancient State, as we have seen, held in check the slaves and propertyless citizens: the slaves were intimidated, the citizens were cajoled. The feudal State, based essentially on agriculture and land tenure, exploited the serfs and kept them down. It also ruled the industrial artisans. The State in Greece and Rome and Mediaeval Europe was more directly brutal than the modern Capitalist State. Hence modern historians, seemingly oblivious of the subtle wrongs of Capitalism, foam with indignation at the baronial lord who straightforwardly declared that he ruled by the power of his sword and the strength of his arm. Each social system creates its own type of ruling class. Feudalism, with its paternalism, cruelty and coarseness, being in a chronic state of war, produced bluff fighting lords who unashamedly professed to hold their peasants down by sheer force. But Capitalism, based on the robbery of labour, produces a ruling class unmatched in history for cunning and hypocrisy — a class which depends on maintaining its political supremacy and economic control through corruption, false education, venal intellectuals, and a prostitute press — a class which, while swindling Labour economically, hopes to cheat it politically.

REFERENCES

1. Law and Politics in Middle Ages — Jenks.
2. Ibid — Jenks.
3. Evolution of Property — Laforgue
4. See The Crusades, by Sir G. Cox; Economic Foundations of Society — A . Loria; Evolution of States — J. M. Robertson; and especially the Sue Novels (The “Pilgrims’ Shell” deals graphically with the Crusades)
5. History of Political Economy — Prof. Ingram
6. Revolutionary Christianity — P. Milum
7. Evolution of States — J.M. Robertson
8. Principles of Sociology — Giddings.
9. History of Politics — Jenks.
10. Critique of Political Economy — Meti
11. History of Politics — Jenks

LAW

Its Origin and Role

Many of the orthodox writers on constitutional and legal history imagine that the Law has always existed. It is the sign of the superficial mind to insist upon the eternal nature of social institutions. Law is simply the means by which the State formally declares what must be done, or must not be done, in accordance with the interests of the prevailing ruling class. Law has its origin, like the State, in the class conflicts arising with the growth of private property. The State defines the Law and puts it into operation. Any revolt against the Law is crushed by the armed force wielded by the State. Thus disobedience to the Law may mean the levying of fines or imprisonment, for behind every legal enactment stands the sovereign powers of the State. Thus we get legality. It is now easy to understand why any class rebelling against the status quo is considered as acting illegally. When examined in its historic setting it is simple enough to grasp the fact that legality means, not the interest of society, but rather the interest of the State — i.e., of the dominant class. Since all subjects of a State are amenable to the Law, it has been deduced by many writers that all subjects are members of the State. Prof. Giddings, however, very cleverly riddles that theory by pointing out that “a class may be considered as subjects of a State Between subjects of the State

and members of the State there may be a momentous difference.”[^] With the rise of Law the State has to appoint officials (which it subsidises) to interpret it. Hence the appointment of Judges.

A great deal of trouble has arisen by confusing Law, the formal demands of the State, with tribal custom, which was the method of interpreting Justice in tribal society. Within the tribe or clan there was no State to enforce decrees. Thus a distinguished legal scholar has said: — “It is the absence of force to enforce decrees which to modern-minded theorists is one of the weaknesses of tribal society.”[^] Within the tribe social administration is conducted by the tribal members in the common council. Unless Law can be enforced it ceases to be Law at all. Hence political society, with the rise of private property, had to organise a State in order to get the requisite force to thrust the wishes of the propertied class upon the community. It was because tribal society had no force to back up its decrees that private property had to smash the democratic administration of the tribe based upon kinship. That, of course, only means that the State cannot co-exist with the tribe one or the other must go under. Within the tribe Justice is administered according to old Customs based partly upon experience and partly upon superstition. The writers who think that Custom is identical with Law confuse two entirely different methods of social organisation. The tribal Custom has its roots in primitive communism. Law has its roots in private property. The former presupposes equality and has no method of enforcing its decrees; the latter rises because of class inequalities and therefore needs an engine of force to ensure obedience. Josephus, the historian of the Jews, is amazed to find that the word *nomos*, which latterly signified Law, was never used in that sense by Homer. In fact, the property-owning Greeks, as Lafargue has pointed out, were surprised at the absence of a word for Law. Sir Henry Maine admits that there are only two terms used in the Homeric writings which look like legal phrases — “Themis” (meaning award) and “Dike” (meaning something between usage or custom and judgment). He emphatically declares that “*nomos*” (a Law) has no place in the writings of Homer. Prof. Abdy traces the Greek word “*nomos*” from which the term Law is derived. He shows that it originally meant “to apportion, to distribute, to allot.”^{*} Later it was pressed into meaning

Law by usage, and finally it means a Law, or ordinance. The transition in the meaning of the word *nomos* from “to allot” into “a Law” established by authority, contains the whole history of the revolution from communistic equality to political and economic inequality. For, the early meaning of the word applies to the equal and peaceful division of the common lands. Its later meaning reveals a social system disturbed with class conflicts, where the need for Law and authority was requisite. Thus while it is true that a knowledge of words and their evolution helps to explain changing history, it is also true that a knowledge of history helps to explain the changing meaning of words.

It is one of the ironies of history that the term “Justice,” taken from the Greek word “*nemesis*,” was also the name of the goddess whose function it was to direct the wrath of the gods against those who infringed on the rights of others! For, Justice means the administration of the Law enforced by the State in the interests of a dominant class! Traced to its root, *nemesis* goes back to *nomizo*, which means “to observe the custom.” Later on it was perverted to mean “to judge.” We have advanced sufficient proof to demonstrate that democratic Justice was administered within tribal society at a period prior to the rise of the State with its legal code. On every hand the State has simply taken up the clan method of administering the Custom and pressed it into the service of the ruling class.

Nothing illustrates the reactionary attitude of the modern intellectuals so much as their concern regarding the small and scant respect paid to private property in ancient times. Prof. Abdy expresses his surprise in tracing the origin of Law, that in the earliest attempts to draw up a legal code, or system of Law, “so much should be devoted to offences, and so little to rules relating to property, none to succession or to contract.”⁴ Sir Henry Maine says: — “Rules relating to property and succession can never be plentiful so long as lands and goods devolve within the family, or the tribe, and, if distributed at all, are distributed within its circle.” These two quotations prove that the further back we go in social development the closer we approach primitive communism, the more we realise that social relations were personal. On the other hand, the nearer we advance to modern times the more we find that social relations are identified with private property. With the steady

growth of the State, and the legal machine, the propertied interests had the power to stamp out the remnants of the clan spirit. This was demonstrated by the attitude of the British State in its relations regarding the Indian village communes.

Lord Metcalfe testified to the vigour of the Indian communistic villages in a report dealing with them issued in 1832 by the House of Commons. He said, in proving how difficult it would be to get rid of the communal villages: — “The village constitution which can survive all outward shock would be, I suspect, easily subverted with the aid of our regulations and Courts of Justice by any disturbance; litigation, above all things, I should think, would destroy it.” That is to say, where everything else failed, the enforcement of Law by the English State would prove efficacious in smashing communal society. Prof. Jenks, while arguing that private property has evolved “naturally”(!) by the aid of “seizure,” says: — “But the most powerful factor has been the development of that particular form of association which we term the State.” Again, it is common knowledge that the clans in Ireland and Scotland* were crushed out by the armed power of the English State. Later on we shall show that the common lands of England were appropriated by the ruling class through exercising its power over the State and legal machine. We see, therefore, that once the owners of private property had sufficient political and military power they used the State and the Law to sweep away everything that stood in the way of the expansion of their class interests. Law becomes more pronounced and definite with the growth of property. Its earliest attempts to express and codify the interests of property-owners may be traced to the period when the war leader, and his warriors, usurped the position of chief of the clan and the other official positions, and replaced the time-honoured Customs with a series of written codes which defined how certain things must be done. The transition from Custom to Law, from a representative chief to a war-leader-kinglet, from clan to State, are parts of the process in the transition from communal property to private ownership. This is evidence of the law of historic development, that changes in the mode of producing and distributing wealth cause corresponding changes in social institutions. When private property was feeble and attempting to express itself legally in written

codes, it found great difficulty in shaking off the immemorial Customs of the clan. Thus most of the early legal codes deal more with personal relations than with property relations. But as property becomes more and more a social force, the barbaric codes deal less with personal affairs and more with affairs relating to property. The jurists, in complaining, as Prof. Abdy does, that the early legal codes deal more with persons than with property, supply the proof that society, in evolving from a personal form to a property form, has brought about a great revolution in the methods of social organisation. The class State, therefore, in drawing up its legal code, stamps its social system as one based upon propertied relations. In this way Law becomes a weapon of class rule. That is why the responsible interpreters of the Law — the Judges — are under the direct control of the State. Law presupposes a property-possessing class. Hence the proverb that “possession is nine points of the Law.” We can therefore appreciate the generalisation formulated by Matthew Arnold that “property is the creator of the Law.” The witty Linguet summed up the matter neatly and forcibly when he told Montesquieu — the author of “The Spirit of the Laws” — that “the spirit of the Law is the spirit of property”!

Transition of Custom to Law

In order to show that the above outline is correct regarding the transition of the clan Custom into a Law of the State, let us briefly examine the transition of Lex Talonis (the blood feud — a life for a life, a tooth for a tooth, etc.) into the legal and codified Weregild (the payment of property for the spilling of blood). While the Weregild figures prominently in the most primitive form of written European Laws, the *Leges Barborum* (the Barbarian Codes), a similar attempt to codify similar offences, was made in other parts of the world. We have already seen that an injury to one member of a clan is resented by the whole clan. As a consequence of this, vengeance was demanded — not for the individual, but for the clan itself. Thus arose blood feuds between clans, and between tribes, in which clans and even tribes were sometimes wiped out. While this may seem an extreme and brutal method of exacting reparation, it was the logical outcome of the animal pugnacities of men living upon a

basis of equality and in a social system based upon kinship. The principle of kinship rested upon the idea that the blood of the clan was sacred, and the principle of equality demanded that an injury against blood could only be avenged by blood.*

One of the problems grappled with by tribal society was the attempt to narrow the circle of the blood feud from the clan to the particular family directly affected. But within the old equalitarian system blood could only be satisfied with blood. With the rise of private property, with the extension of slavery and the buying and selling of human flesh and blood, with the rise of the monogamous family which permitted the bride to be bartered, there slowly grew up the conception that spilled blood and injuries could be recompensed by the offender offering property to the injured. With the greater extension of private property and the rise of commerce, money was offered and accepted by the injured party. This transition was accomplished very slowly, because the clan members hated the idea of equating blood against property or money. They looked upon such an offering as “blood money” — a term of opprobrium which has been handed down from the past. The interests of the ruling class, with propertied interests to defend, could be best served by the breakdown of the blood feud. For, when the feud broke out between neighbouring clans, or among families of different clans, it might ultimately assume a classcharacter and become a feud of classes. Thus with the rise of the State everything reminiscent of the clan was uprooted. With the transition of the clan chief or war-leader into a kinglet it became a Law to enforce the paying of a property tribute by those guilty of shedding blood, because the State insisted upon maintaining the King’s peace. The King and the State enforced the acceptance of a monetary fine, by those injured or wounded, for several other reasons. The State looks upon its male citizens as potential soldiers and tribute payers, and it does not desire to see them killed in private family feuds. By acting as arbiter in the quarrel, and enforcing the payment and acceptance of the monetary fine, part of it is retained by the State and becomes a source of revenue. Thus, as Lafargue points out, “private property once established, blood no longer demands blood; it demands property.” We see, therefore, how a clan Custom becomes

a Law of the State.

English Common Law

English writers who deal with the growth of the Constitution and of the Law in England are enthusiastic regarding the fact that it was the first country in which Common Law was fully developed. But this was not due to anything peculiarly English. It was the outcome of the method by which Feudalism was organised. We shall have occasion to show that at the time of the Norman Conquest, William held supreme power because he refused to allow any of the barons to hold large feudatories. They were thus unable to concentrate any great force. The real sovereign power of the nation was vested in the Crown. Thus, instead of each baron being a law maker and administrator, the Law was administered by the English State. On the Continent, especially in those parts where the barons held large feudal estates, they set up their own courts and made their own Law. This tended to make each baronage a little kingdom, and produced that decentralisation and localism which was one of the grave weaknesses of the feudal system. The English State preserved a semblance of national unity because the administration of the Law was in the hands of the Crown, which also tended to strengthen the State at the expense of the individual power of the barons. Due, therefore, to the method whereby the basis of English wealth — the land — was owned and distributed among the barons, England was the first European nation to formulate a Common Law. Similarly, the English Constitution was battered into shape in accordance with the play and interplay of the clash of interests that took place between the Crown, Church, barons, and burghers. This conflict also facilitated the further development of English Law, because the opposing interests within the ranks of the property holders compelled them to draw up written and formal statements to enable them to adjust their private differences; otherwise their ranks would have been weakened by internal dissensions, which are always dangerous in the face of discontented and propertyless rebels.

We shall see, at a later period, that it was only the property-holding class

that had any legal status in feudal England. The legal code was defined by the State, but it was left to the local land nobles to interpret it. Thus, while the Tudor governments passed laws prohibiting the enclosing of land, these laws were rendered inoperative by the fact that it was the landed proprietors — who were enclosing the peasants' lands — who interpreted and administered the laws! In the eyes of these custodians of the Law the peasants had no legal status. Thus the Enclosure Acts were abortive.

Viewed from this standpoint, Law is simply a series of codified statements by which property-owners agree to abide in dividing the fruits of exploitation wrung from the subject class. Hence the importance of Law as a social institution after the rise of private property and the division of society into classes. Law enables the members of the ruling class to adjust their private grievances in order to preserve class unity. Consequently, the making and administration of Law is an important function of the executive committee of the ruling class — the State. Law is the social and historic illustration of the truth regarding the need for honour among thieves.

REFERENCES

1. Principles of Sociology — Giddings.
2. History of Politics — Jenks.
3. Ancient Law — Maine.
4. Lectures on Feudalism — Abdy.
5. Ibid.
6. Evolution of Property — Lafargue

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

The State within the State

During the Middle Ages the only centralised and semi-international institution was the Roman Catholic Church. It had shaped and organised itself in the image of the Roman State. Whatever merits the Church may have had were not due so much to its religious inspiration as to its method of temporal organisation and its economic power. The Roman State urged the peoples of all lands to come under its protecting wing; it desired everyone to look upon it as the saviour against all enemies; and to seek no other power than that situated at Rome, which acted as a benevolent father to all who accepted its guardianship and paid it tribute. The Roman Catholic Church organised itself upon a similar basis. So, when the Roman State had passed away, its ghost, rigged out in all the trappings and drapery of centralised authority, haunted Europe in the name of religion. The reason why the Church was so powerful was due to its control of the land of Europe, of which it was the largest owner. The Church was the most centralised and best organised force in Christendom because it had the greatest property interests to conserve. Writers unwittingly associate the desire to defend material interests with the State, consequently the Church, the wealthiest power in the Middle Ages, has been called the "State within the State," thus demonstrating that the State is a weapon to

defend property-owners. When Constantino had made the Church —which was then accumulating property— a State religion by bribing the bishops to pervert the aim of Christianity from being an attack on the propertied owners into a defence of propertied interests, ever since that time the Church became more anxious to get hold of property than to attend to its alleged spiritual work. Indeed, it might well be stated that the superstitions and terrors of hell fire, the peace and glory of heaven, were enthusiastically preached as a means to strengthen and extend the power of the Church over the material things of life. Theoretically the Church was only interested in heaven and hell; practically it worked to own as much of this planet as possible. When Rome was overthrown, the Church, ever alert on things of the earth earthy, anticipated that event by transferring its centralised organisation to the more economically stable Byzantine empire. But when the barbarians began to dominate the property and lands of the Roman State, the greatest missionary crusade ever undertaken by any religious organisation was begun by the Roman Catholic Church. It aimed at the conversion of the heathens who had seized the wealth of Rome. At the conclusion of the missionary propaganda the heathens were converted, but the Church had more property than any king in Christendom. Theological historians assure us that the missionary crusade was highly successful. We agree. Here and there vigorous protests had been made by sincere and devoutly conscientious men like Tertullian and Salvianus, who realised how things were drifting. A careful study of history will show that the remarkable conversion to Christianity that took place among the barbaric tribes coincides, strangely enough, with the growth of Feudalism. The rise of the feudal States in Europe was accomplished, as we have seen, by the sword. But the Catholic Church also played an important part in facilitating the overthrow of the clans. In the transition from tribal communism to Feudalism the process of “taming” the rebel villagers was quickened by stamping out the tribal religion which was one of the great binding forces that held the tribe together.

This function of religion has been emphasised by religious writers. Thus one authority says: — “Religion was the binding force of the tribe, and its nature as such favours the disputed etymology — religio (I bind together).”^

It is more than a coincidence that it was generally the chief and his warriors who were first converted, and afterwards the villagers. So long as discontent against the usurping and plundering tactics of the chief and his warriors was prevalent among the members of the clan, the old tribal religion provided a means of propagating a rebellion or organising a revolt. Thus the chief and his colleagues had everything to gain by crushing out a religion which drew its inspiration from the old days, when equality, freedom, and kinship were tribal attributes. Moreover, we have plenty of historic evidence to show that the new religion was enforced upon the tribal folks with the sword. Everything tends to show that Catholicism, the official religion of a Church owning and controlling great tracts of land and vast treasures, was the ideal “spiritual” propaganda to capture the souls of the villagers— while the “nobles” were capturing their tribal lands. It is significant that Constantine, Theodoric, and Charlemagne joined the Church. The latter even went the length of imposing Christianity upon the peoples he subjected, unless his purposes could be better served otherwise. The rapid growth of the Catholic Church in Medieval Europe was not due to the preaching of the word so much as to the wielding of the sword. Catholicism was a weapon in the hands of the rising ruling class to strangle the spirit of the clan. This explains the historic and economic conditions of its great success.

The Church added to its property in various ways during the Middle Ages. By posing as arbiter in disputes between rival kings and quarrelling barons, the Church was generally rewarded. The greatest source of revenue was due, as Paul Lafargue wittily says, to the fact that only the Church had the key of heaven. This meant that property and lands were donated with the expectation, no doubt, that a place in the celestial palace would be reserved for the donor. Donations which, in the first instance, were voluntary offerings, were afterwards compulsorily enforced. Montesquieu says: — “Any person dying without leaving a part of his possessions to the Church — which was termed dying *déconfés* — was debarred from communion and sepulchre. If a man died intestate his relatives had to appeal to the bishops to appoint arbiters, who co-jointly with themselves fixed the amount which the defunct ought to have bequeathed if he had made a will.”^ It was the “Church that was clearly

responsible, if not for the invention, at least for the practice of leaving lands by will — a practice which probably did more than anything else to break up the old kinship principles on which the village system was largely based.” The Church also gathered riches by spreading the report that the world would end in the year 1000 — the millennium. As the educational system of society was in the hands of the Church, it was impossible to counteract this prophecy. People, fearing that the end was so near, thought only of future salvation, which they were prepared to purchase by donating their goods and chattels to the Church. When the year 1000 safely passed, there were innumerable appeals lodged by the victims for the restoration of their property. The Church met these demands by circulating terrifying curses and maledictions against those who dared insist on the return of gifts “dedicated to God and consecrated to the saints.” It has been suggested that the Church deliberately organised the Crusades as a pretext for ridding Europe of meddlesome princes and bellicose barons, with the fond hope of getting a part of the estates belonging to them.*

It is difficult to find any policy of the Catholic Church that was not economic in aim. The introduction of celibacy, begun by Pope Hildebrand, was another part of the Church’s great activity to conserve its material interests. Just as in the clan the influence of private property was the motive force that led to the rise of the monogamous family, in order that the father’s children might inherit his property, so the temptation for married priests to provide for their children out of the property of the Church compelled the Pope to enforce celibacy. In order to crush the revolt that naturally arose against this measure from the married priests. Pope Urban II. actually enslaved the wives of the clergy and handed them over to the nobles, etc.^ Catholic critics of Socialism who hysterically proclaim the sacredness of the hearth and family would do well to spend a little time studying the history of their own Church.

The Church and Genius

Due to its enormous wealth in lands and buildings, the Church attracted many men who had little in common with the hurly-burly and fighting of the Middle Ages. These men — artists, philosophers, writers — sought the peace and quietude of the monastery rather than the clash and din of the battlefield. Many of them were honestly devout. Many of them gave the Church all their property in return for a life of devotional tranquility and studious peace. Thus the Church offered a haven for those temperaments which pondered over the serious problems of life — problems which the sword could never solve. Several of these men left behind them rich treasures in art and literature which were dedicated to the institution that had guaranteed them the material comforts — food, clothing, and shelter - by aid of which their talents had found expression. The prestige of the Church was enhanced by the efforts of such men, just as the reputation of a patron is increased by the talent of the genius he befriends. Thus there is nothing mysterious in the religious vein that permeates many of the beautiful and noble works of the Middle Ages; for the wealthy Church was the only institution that offered the opportunities for the cultivation of such things. At the zenith of its economic glory Athens attracted the genius of the Mediterranean world — few of the great Greeks were Athenians — and protected and nurtured them. The commercial prosperity of Florence, Naples, Venice, and the Italian cities went hand in hand with a wondrous outburst of intellectual and artistic activity. The art and learning of Spain and the Dutch expanded with the expansion of the commercial process. And England thrilled with mental energy after her bold navigators revealed the magical allurements of a new world. Amidst the complex threads of social development the roots of art, learning, and genius, like everything else, reach down and flourish best in a good economic soil. As Athens, Florence, Venice, Spain, Holland, and England enabled genius to express itself, so genius ennobled the cities and nations which had befriended it. Thus in the same way the Catholic Church was enriched in art and literature by the talented men who were grateful for the opportunities given them during a period of stress and conflict. Furthermore,

the Catholic Church has always realised the need for maintaining its power by controlling education. In the Middle Ages, and at a later date, the Church was quick to realise that clever young men in the ranks of the subject classes might become leaders for the rebellious peasants and rising commercial class. By patronising such men and “educating” them the Church was able to keep under control the vigorous minds that might have endangered its power. This function is no longer the special work of the Church in modern society. The subtle capitalist class attempts to confuse the active brains of the wage-earners by specially endowing educational associations and organising them for “workers.”

Political Power of the Church

The great ecclesiastical power of the Middle Ages, with its far-spreading propertied interests, was in reality a political rather than a religious force. As we have already seen, it used its phenomenal religious influence to defend its immediate economic interests rather than to promote its alleged spiritual function. Its assistance was always freely given to any section or class that would preserve its economic policy. Sometimes the Church supported the monarchy, sometimes the barons, and sometimes the rebel forces organised against the monarchy and barons; but it was always to be found against those who threatened its temporal power. Thus many writers charge the Church with having pursued an inconsistent policy — being sometimes on this side, and at a later period furiously crushing those whom it had previously supported. Superficially examined, it would seem that its policy was a vacillating one; but beneath all the seeming contradictions there lurked the conscious and consistent aim of helping those whose policy would weaken an enemy or strengthen an ally. The fundamental interests of the Roman Catholic Church, represented in its large landed estates, were bound up in the perpetuation of the feudal system. The later hierarchal system of the Church corresponded very much to the relations between the classes in Feudalism. Thus every revolt against the feudal system and land tenure was treated as an assault against Christianity! To accuse rebels with being irreligious is

as old as private property itself. Even the founders of Christianity had to meet the charge of being heretical when they first propagated their creed. In modern times Socialism has had to meet similar accusations. The charge of heresy hurled against revolutionary movements with avowed economic and political aims completely vindicates the Marxian law regarding the connection between property relations and religion. That is why Socialists are dubbed Atheists; and Atheists, to their vexatious amazement, are called Socialists. It was the uncanny power of the Catholic Church, and its political influence, that compelled most of the revolts against Feudalism to assume a religious aspect in order to prevent the awful charge of heresy being hurled at the rebels. But the religious nature of the revolts did not save the rebels from the hysterical and fiendish wrath of the feudal ruling class and the Church. The cruelty meted out to the Lollards when the Crown and Church lit the murderous fires at Smithfield is a case in point.

The burghers and merchants in their historic conflict against Feudalism were opposed by the Catholic Church with such vehemence that Capitalism had to find a new religion in order to “reform” a Christianity which resented usury and interest, and declared it immoral and irreligious. Capitalism had to get a new religion to “protest” against Roman Catholicism, with its numerous holy days — the product of an agricultural economy. Of equal importance was the fact that the Roman Church was of an essentially quasi-international character, whereas Capitalism is essentially nationalistic. The rise of Capitalism and the greed of the monarchy and the nobles for the extensive property of the Catholic Church furnish the dynamic force behind the Reformation and Protestantism. Viewed in this light, the Reformation was the outcome of forces fundamentally economic in nature. ^ Thus, as Marx has neatly stated, “the religious world is but the reflex of the real world.”*

To sum up, the Catholic Church exerted a great influence on the political conflicts and class struggles of Feudalism. Its immense semi-international power was due to its large landed estates and property in the various countries of Christendom. Being a great economic force in every country in Europe, it had immense power in the State in each of these countries. Like every great institution or class owning property, the Catholic Church had great

economic and therefore great political power. Through the propertied State of Feudalism the Catholic Church enforced its will upon its dependents and subjects. It was therefore looked upon in the politics of Christendom as the State within the State.

REFERENCES

1. Revolutionary Christianity — Parton Milum. (See also Feurbach, by F. Engels, who criticises this meaning of the word.)
2. The Spirit of the Laws — Montesquieu.
3. Historical Sketch of Sacerdotal Celibacy — Lea.
4. See Footnote regarding Literature on Economics of Protestantism and of Reformation.
5. Capital — Karl Marx.

Economics of Reformation

There are a great number of authoritative books which examine the economic forces underlying the conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism. The cleverest performance, from the Secularist standpoint, is "Dynamics of Religion" (Wiseman), written by J.M. Robertson; this author's "Evolution of States" is also valuable.

The clearest statement has been made by the Marxians, who clearly outline the causation of the economic forces. See "Reformation," by Prof. Bang (S.L. Press); "Puritanism," by C. Meily (S.L. Press, 1/6); "Feurbach," by F. Engels (S.L. Press, 1/6).

Many non-Socialists, who have followed the Marxian historical method, deal cleverly with the subject. See "Jews and Modern Capitalism," by Prof. Sombart; "Social Organisation in England," by Prof. Ashley; "Economics of Liberalism," by Prof. Levi.

The most candid admission in theological literature regarding the economics of the Reformation is made in Prof. Troelstch's "Protestantism and Progress." Regarding this book, Prof. Ashley in his "Social Organisation of

England” regrets that Troelstch’s book has not been translated into English; he will find that an English edition was published prior to his book.

THE FEUDAL STATE

The Norman Conquest

After the Norman Conquest, England developed institutions which were slightly different from those on the Continent. The customary explanation is that the “English” had certain innate qualities which enabled them to develop a better and more favourable constitution than any in Europe. It is difficult to grasp what is meant by the “English,” who were composed of a medley of different races. The insular position of the country and certain socio-economic differences, to which we will refer later on, explain the line of English development.

We have already shewn that William of Normandy invaded England for motives of plunder. The expedition was urged on, no doubt, by the fact that the peasants of Normandy had frequently revolted against their masters. When the conquest had been completed, William had a catalogue of the captured booty drawn up and the country’s property carefully scheduled. This list is called the “Domesday” book; it has been aptly described as a “geld” book (“geld” is an historical term meaning money or tribute). The Conqueror divided the land, especially at strategical points, among his warrior colleagues, who had to swear to aid him with the force of arms w^hen occasion demanded. Many estates were left in the hands of the original owners on the condition

that they swore the oath of fealty and accepted the Conqueror as their King. William, as supreme landowner of England, gave each of his favourites landed estates. He took great care not to grant any of his warriors a large feudatory. He gave, however, many of them several estates which were situated widely apart in different shires of the country. The only large feudatories in England were situated near the borders of Scotland and Wales, which, being enemy countries, had to be guarded against by large forces. William was essentially a soldier, and he realised that he could only maintain his sovereignty by limiting the power of his warriors. Hence his reason for splitting up their power by subdividing the lands held by each of them. By doing this the barons were kept relatively weak. It prevented any one of them from concentrating much power in a district, thus making it almost impossible for any baron to challenge the rule of the King. The relative strength of the feudal Crown in English history, as compared with the Crown in Scotland, Germany, France, etc., was due, in great measure, to the elaborate measures taken by William to limit the power of the lords and barons. In other countries where large feudal estates were the rule, the powerful barons were in many cases local kinglets, and were consequently a source of annoyance to any monarch who tried to hold them in check. Land being the source of wealth and power under Feudalism, large estates made powerful lords. And powerful lords might hunger to wear the King's crown. William further increased the power of the Crown by attaching to his support the pledges of the numberless freemen of England. In return for the land which they now held by the pleasure of the King, they had to promise to defend the Crown. The Conqueror thus created a force, independent of the barons, which he could use to suppress any rebel lord. These differences in the method of controlling the land in England, as compared with other countries, had a far-reaching effect in the development of English institutions. Therefore, the difference in the political evolution of England, when contrasted with the Continent cannot be explained by so-called "racial" or "national" characteristics, but can be understood in examining the conditions whereby the economic power — the land — was owned and controlled. The English constitution, evolved as a result of the clash of interests within the ranks of the property-owning class

— the

Crown, Church, and barons. The burghers — the merchants and craftsmen of the towns — entered the field of social action as a subject propertied class, but they nevertheless indirectly influenced the development of the constitution. Whatever differences of interests may have existed within the ranks of the ruling class, their interests were identical as against the serfs. We must note here the difference in individual interests within a class as compared with the class interests of the individual. The personal quarrels for political and economic control amongst the envious and grasping members of the rulers never prevented them from lining up, as a class, unanimously against any uprisings of the propertyless class — the serfs.

The serfs were the members of the propertyless and enslaved class in feudal society. They were part and parcel of the lord's estate, and were sold with it when the estate changed hands. In return for the privilege of working a piece of land by which they maintained themselves, they had to till the land of the lord. The serfs, while having access to the common land, and possessing other privileges, were treated most brutally by their lords.

It was the attitude of the barons towards their serfs which illustrates the hollowness and hypocrisy of the so-called chivalry of the fighting lords. There seems a tendency among certain historians to throw a romantic glamour over the Middle Ages and to idealise the exploits of the "noble and chivalrous knights." It has been stated that the rules of chivalry were no more exemplary than the rules which govern the stern training of modern pugilists. The virtuous knights who sought to protect the honour of fair maidens of their own class had no scruples regarding the honour of daughters of the serfs. All the much-vaunted chivalry of the lords vanishes when it is remembered that Feudalism empowered the baron to exact the "knight's fee" — the *jus primae noctis*, or right of the first night — which enabled him to deflower the serf's bride on the eve of her marriage. The lord had also the power to dispose of the female serfs in marriage according to his will. It is interesting to note that the Catholic bishops, especially at Amiens, stubbornly resisted all attempts to deprive them of the *jus primae noctis*, which they had the right to exercise as custodians of the estates of the Church. ^With the gradual improvement in

the conditions of the serfs, due to purely economic causes, the lords accepted a tribute in lieu of the *jus primae noctis*. We will refer later to the reason why chivalry was practised towards women of the landed nobility. At this point we are only interested in demonstrating that the courteous knight errant of romance never extended his chivalry to women of the propertyless class.

The Peasants' Revolt

Towards the end of the 14th century the conditions of the serfs improved. With the rise of towns and the demand for agricultural produce many serfs were able to commute their labour services for a monetary payment. This method was economical for the lord who realised that the serf did not work willingly on his master's land. On the other hand, the monetary payment was always forthcoming. It is an undisputed law of economics that the productivity of labour increases with the increased freedom of the worker. Slavery passes into serfdom, and serfdom evolves into wage labour. Each of these steps was facilitated by the master class in order to increase the productivity of the workers.* The great plague which decimated the population of England in the 14th century created a great dearth of workers. In accordance with the law of supply and demand the wages of peasants rapidly rose. This led to the State putting into operation a 14th century Munitions Act called the Statute of Labourers, which sought to enforce the rates of wages and conditions of labour prevailing prior to the plague. We see here that the State was performing its historic function in attempting to crush the peasants at the expense of the landed nobility. Despite the restrictions of the State, the conditions of the peasants improved, and they were emboldened to revolt. The story of the peasant rebellions in England led by Wat Tyler and Jack Cade may be found in most of the history books. A very important point, however, regarding the Tyler rebellion should be noted. The King, Richard II., granted the demands of the rebels when he was confronted by their organised might. But when the peasant army disbanded, after the King had pledged his word to redress their wrongs, when the organised might of the rebels was withdrawn, and Tyler, their leader, murdered, then the King revealed his

true attitude towards the peasants by proclaiming “bondsmen they had been and bondsmen they should remain, and in worse bondage than before.” The wholesale massacres that followed should be a grave warning to the modern Labour movement. The peasants’ revolt was crushed because the rebels accepted and relied upon the word of their ruler. The peasants were butchered because they foolishly disbanded that might which the monarch feared but respected. The first rising of Labour in English history was paralysed because its able and honest leader — Tyler — was struck down. These three points — the belief in promises, the absence of organised might, and the death of the leader, with its disorganising effect — should make modern Labour reflect upon the lessons of the revolt and act accordingly.*

Despite the class hatred of the landowning nobles, the scarcity of labour made it necessary for them to open up their estates to the peasants on terms which added to the liberty of the latter. Thus, at the close of the 14th century, and during the beginning of the 15th century, the peasants attained the highest degree of relative comfort reached in the history of English Labour.

The Lollards

The peasants’ revolt was assisted by the teachings of such men as John Ball, who, in conjunction with many other Lollards, helped to stir up the workers to action. In the early stages of the Lollard movement its advocates tended to attack the greed of the Catholic Church and criticise the abuse it made of its fabulous wealth. During this early period many nobles secretly “sympathised” with the Lollards. Their “sympathy” was based upon the hope that the agitation of the “poor priests” would lead to a plundering of the estates of the Church. When, however, it was found that the Lollards were active participants in the revolt of the peasants, when the nobles realised that John Ball and his colleagues were stirring up the wealth producers against their feudal masters, when the State understood that the preachers were denouncing not only priestly greed but also the greed of the ruling class — then was formed the immediate coalition of the propertied landed interests — the Crown, Church, and lords — then were lit the martyr fires of Smithfield,

and then began an organised persecution of the rebels. But the State made even a greater move in order to overwhelm the elements of discontent existing within the realm. It stirred up racial hatreds and plunged the nation into war. We saw how the State in Greece and Rome depended upon militarism to prevent the discontented and subject class from discussing internal social problems. Thus it has been truly said: — “Nothing can hinder, however, that foreign wars shall in the end aggrandise the upper as against the lower classes, developing, as they do, the relation of subjection, increasing the specifically military class, and setting up the spirit of force.”[^] The State — the robber burg of the ruling class — through its control of the various avenues of social administration, is able to undermine most rebellious movements by appealing to the “patriotism” of all sections of the community to save the “national honour,” thus blinding the disinherited as to the cause of their social misery.

The Growth of Parliament

The rise of Parliament, an institution which had its origin in Southern Europe and not in England, was the work of a naturalised Frenchman, Simon de Montfort, who represented certain baronial interests in conflict with the Crown. The many appeals of the ruling class to the “people,” were but the attempts of certain sections of the ruling class to rally the wealth-accumulating and therefore important burghers to their assistance. Thus during a crisis within the State, caused generally by some quarrel over a political or economic issue, the Crown or the barons would seek the help of the burghers. With the entrance of the burghers into the political arena, and the rise of Parliament, it is sometimes assumed that this meant the advent of a subject class to some control in the guidance of the policy of the State. But the well-informed Mr. Gardiner assures us — “Even the House of Commons was comparatively an aristocratic body. The labouring population in town and country had no share in its exaltation. Even the citizens and the merchants and the tradesmen looked down upon those beneath them without trust or affection.”^{“*} Likewise the much-vaunted Magna Charta was

simply a charter to guarantee the freedom of the propertied members of the community. Thus Parliament in Medieval Europe was not the glorious beginning of democracy as many historians infer. It was, as Adam Smith has pointed out, the desire of the Crown to strengthen its power against the barons by granting representation to the burghers. The State, which was mostly influenced by the King, seldom called Parliament unless to demand money. Indeed, the burghers or Commons had only the Constitutional right to criticise the State but not to direct or guide its policy. The moneys provided by the prosperous burghers were squandered by the King and his nobles; and the Commons could only protest or sometimes impeach a minister of the Crown. Hence the early history of Parliament is the history of protests and petitions put forward by the burghers praying that the concessions bought by their money be put into operation. "No one will pretend," says Prof. Jenks, "that the Parliament of the Middle Ages took any direct part in the government. . . Still less in the Tudor period was the business of the country in the hands of Parliament. Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth were the last persons to admit such a theory. It was the King's Council and not the Parliament which ruled England."^ According to Gneist it was the desire of the Crown to maintain its prestige within the Committee of Barons that led it to appeal to the merchants and burghers. Despite all the concessions granted the merchants in return for money grants, they were never permitted to enter the real sphere of the State — the Councils of the Barons and King. Moreover, when the King approached the Commoners and sought their advice, they refused because they "foresaw a demand for money as a consequence of any 'advising of theirs.'"^ It was only when the King desired special help against the barons that he appealed to the burghers. Thus when the ruling class was not divided against itself the nation was ruled directly through the State without Parliament being summoned for years.

There were many violent quarrels within the ranks of the feudal master class. Regarding the cause of them, Gneist says: — "On occasion of every conflict hitherto arising between the great lords and the Crown, endeavours had been made to seize the chief public offices and to turn to the account of the ruling faction the functions of government, as well as the right of granting the great

fiefs (estates).” One of the greatest of these struggles was the War of the Roses, which greatly modified the course of the future development of political England by disturbing the relative strength of the various sections within the ruling class. So fierce was the conflict within the baronial elements during the War of the Roses that numerous lords were killed and the power of their class thereby weakened. The Crown, in consequence of the destruction of so many powerful barons, was relatively strengthened and became thenceforth the undisputed power in the State. The Catholic Church, although still powerful, was soon to be swept aside. With the downfall of the more powerful barons, King Henry VII. demanded that the remaining lords should disband their small armies. As the Crown possessed the only train of Artillery in the country, the demand was complied with. Thus at a stroke the King destroyed the power of the only political element that could dictate the policy of the State and elect its ministers.

The Reformation

In consequence of the added prestige of the Crown, it next sought to crush the other great power which alone was able to challenge its control over the State — the Catholic Church. The real driving forces in the attack on the Catholic Church, and the rise of Protestantism, were undisguised material motives. Economic causation alone explains the Reformation. By plundering the landed estates of the Church, the Crown was able to replace the old nobility with a new landed class, which, as a result of its position, was servile towards the monarchy. The new nobility had a semi-commercial spirit as compared with the baronial class it replaced. The Crown reinforced its power by using this new nobility as a tool. The traders and merchants also assisted in the overthrow of the Catholic power, with its numerous holy days and festivals, which, while not interfering with agriculture — the principal industry of Feudalism — was highly inconvenient to the workshop economy of the rising capitalist class. The merchants had a further grievance against the Catholic Church on account of its bitter opposition to usury. Roman Catholicism did not, however, oppose usury on the ground of pure principle. The Church was

more clearly aware of the revolutionary nature of the merchant class than were the other sections of the feudal ruling class. It should be noted, however, that the barons and the Crown opposed usury too. But it must not be thought that their opposition was due to any high ethical ideal or moral feeling. It arose as a result of the economic and social conditions prevailing in the Middle Ages. Prof. W. Cunningham, who is a prominent Doctor of Divinity, says: — “Kings were glad to borrow on the security of the royal jewels. . . . The financiers also lent money to landed proprietors. . . . The lending of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was almost entirely for military and other unproductive purposes; it enriched the moneyed men, who obtained high interest on their loans. . . . Thus applied, the money failed to bring an increase of wealth; but remained as Aristotle would have said — ‘barren.’ This goes far to account for the long-continued prejudice against Jews and Lombards. Since no addition to the wealth of the community arose from their intervention, it seemed that any gain accruing to their operations must have been made at the expense of the borrowers, and ought to be condemned as extortionate. Under these conditions the traditional objection to interest of every kind was strongly maintained, and found expression in the writings of the causists and in the decisions of ecclesiastical courts against usury.” ^ Therefore the Catholic Church, representing the moral and spiritual interests of the ruling class, of which it was a most important member, declared usury to be irreligious and ungodly. The Crown and the barons opposed usury with deep moral indignation, because, as Dr. Cunningham shows in the passage cited, they looked upon the merchants and financiers as exploiters and social parasites who drew profit from them. Thus, pursued to its final analysis, usury was attacked because the borrowers — the Crown and the barons — objected to pay interest on the money they borrowed! The Crown and the barons borrowed extensively from the merchants, to whom they became deeply financially involved, in order to fit out the Crusade expeditions.* Hence a well-known writer says that “it was not without cause that the practice of usury became a burning question between the new commercial class and the Church.”^

The motive behind the opposition to usury was, we repeat, an economic

one. It serves to illustrate how economic interests became moral ideals. The baronial ruling class, prompted by the Church, was led to realise that capital was destined to play a destructive role regarding Feudalism. It became imperative, therefore, to hamper the growing influence of capital in order to safeguard and reinforce Feudalism. Thus economic pressure became the basis for the great ethical and spiritual propaganda of the feudal ruling class in its efforts to strengthen its social system. That the objection to usury was at bottom an objection to paying interest on debts is well illustrated by the action of certain English kings, who borrowed from the Jews and then either repudiated their debts or deported their creditors out of the country. It was the awful curse of damnation hurled at the heads of money-lending Christians that explains, in many cases, why the financiers of Europe were Jews. Being outside the pale of the Catholic Church, it mattered little whether Jews lent money or not, because in the eyes of all Christians they were damned anyway! Therefore the merchant class was compelled to fight the Catholic Church in order to obtain the right to practise usury — “a breed of barren metal,” as Shakespeare described it. The burghers thereupon organised a new religion by reforming the old — a religion which was more tolerant, and which, indeed, praised the austere virtues necessary for small merchants and burghers seeking to accumulate capital. Hence Puritanism became the creed of the rising capitalist class. ^ °

The Reformation received a great impetus from the quarrel between Henry VIII. and the Pope regarding the many marriages of the former. Even this quarrel was one based primarily upon the transmission of property and was caused by the need for a male heir to the English throne. In his anxiety for a son, Henry was compelled to defy one of the most respected laws of Feudalism — the sacredness of the marriage tie. Under Feudalism property was inherited in accordance with the law of primogeniture — the principle under which the eldest son of a family succeeds to the real estate of the father. The basic aim of chivalry in the Middle Ages was to protect the honour of women of the ruling class so that there should be no suspicion regarding the father of their children. Thus, in order to prevent ambiguity of parentage, which might involve the landed estate, the marriage tie was most holy and

indissoluble. Chasteness in woman was the greatest virtue. Henry VIII's many marriages were not, as has been suggested, the outcome of sheer lust. As King of England he could easily, as no doubt he did, have satisfied any sexual abnormality without having to trouble about marriage. The need for a male heir explains the rash intrigues of Anne Boleyn, who knew why she had been made Queen of England and what was expected from her. This unfortunate woman realised the King's inability to provide a healthy heir — hence her immoralities. Despite his several marriages, Henry was unable to rear a healthy son. The Pope earnestly tried to reconcile the King by suggesting that he should marry secretly; and the same advice was given him by the Protestant leaders. Henry did not quarrel with the Pope because of his enthusiasm for the propaganda of Luther. Both Luther and the English King were sworn foes. What Henry did covet were the rich estates and wealth of the Catholic Church and the princely sums which were sent annually to Rome as tribute. The merchants backed up the King in his attack upon Catholicism because they had many reasons for crushing the power which was thwarting their development. The burghers remembered that in their struggle for municipal freedom they could always wring concessions from the poverty-stricken baron by financial means, whereas they were opposed most bitterly by the wealthy Church. To read the records of the conflict between the interests of the merchants and the Church is to understand the reason why the former rallied to the Reformation. Thus it has been said that Protestantism is the religion of capital. So far as the Crown and the courtiers were concerned they attacked the Catholic Church, not because the Church violated the principles of "Christianity," but because they desired to violate its property. Thus property rules Man!

With the weakening of the Catholic Church, the only great power left in control of the State was the Crown. The new landed nobility, created by the Crown out of the plunder of the Church, lacked the fighting fibre of the old barons who checked the arrogance of the King. Henceforth, until the Revolution, the State and the Crown were identical.

The Enclosures

From the time it was found that land used as pasture for sheep could produce more profit than when used as arable land, the landlords commenced to enclose the peasants' land. Due to its insular position, England was practically the only country in Europe that could successfully breed sheep. On the Continent, where the national areas were simply battlefields, sheep were difficult to rear owing to their sheer helplessness. Besides, they were much sought after by foraging expeditions. After the Norman Conquest England was engaged in many wars, but they were never fought in the home territory. Being thus immune from foreign armies the English were able to breed sheep, and thus export wool. It is to the exportation of wool that England traces the beginning of her foreign trade and her vast woollen industry. The rapid development of the exportation of wool led to the transforming of arable land into sheep pastures. Thousands of families were turned off the lands and compelled to beg; many of them became rogues and vagabonds; and some of them were dangerously rebellious. The literature of the period shows how serious indeed had become the misery of the English peasantry. In the early days of the Middle Ages, when Feudalism was at its zenith, the lords, even beneath their coarseness, adopted a stern but paternal attitude towards their peasants. The spirit of the clan system still breathed through class dominance. Then the economic theory of the time was that the interest of the individual was subordinate to the community; then the social system was one of social service from the King downwards. All that had passed away and was now replaced with the spirit of commercialism, which demanded "freedom" of action to dispose of one's belongings as one chose, despite the sufferings of others. The enclosures were put into operation because it was more economical to breed sheep than to breed men. Hence the taunt of Thomas More, who said that meek sheep were now devouring men. The time had arrived, cried Gilpin, when there "never were so many gentlemen and so little gentleness." Stubbs quotes another person who said that "these enclosures be the causes why rich men eat up poor men as beasts do grass." "Enclosures make fat beasts and lean poor people," wrote someone else.

The very cause of the enclosures, the desire to turn arable land into sheep runs, reacted upon agriculture and compelled the landlords to enclose even more land in order to meet the needs and demands for food of the rapidly expanding towns. These later enclosures enabled the landlords and the small independent farmers — who now rapidly became capitalist farmers — to carry through an agrarian revolution. The enclosures gave the capitalist farmers “the opportunity of greatly increasing the production from the land without additional expenditure of capital.” ^^ Marx clinches the point, in the most remarkable study of industrial history ever written, by saying: — “Thus they (the capitalist farmers) grew rich at the expense both of their labourers and their landlords. No wonder, therefore, that England at the end of the 16th century had a class of capitalist farmers, rich, considering the circumstances of the time.”^^ Their riches, however, were conditioned on the agonised despair of the hungry and bedraggled wretches who swarmed along the highways of the country. So dangerous, indeed, did the “vagabonds” and “rogues” become that the State attempted to put down the beggars by cruel and ferocious enactments. Laws were passed during the reign of “bluff King Hal” — Henry III. — to whip, punish, imprison, brand, torture, and execute the victims of the greed of the land grabbers. It is well to observe how the State punished the vagabonds after the propertied class had made them “vagabonds,” and to contrast the treatment meted out to those who filched the peasants’ land! We here notice that disorder arises in society as a result of the rapacity of the propertied class, and that the State, true to its historic function, puts down uprisings by crushing the innocent and propertyless dupes of the ruling faction. As the enclosures were extended the number of unemployed wretches increased, until, seething with revolt, they became a menace to society. Brutal legislation had failed to intimidate and cow the landless “rogues.” Thereupon, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the Poor Law, the first great reform granted to the English propertyless class, was put into operation. It was passed not for the sake of the landless wretches, but for the safety of the State, which was threatened. Thus among the many weapons used by the State to defend the interests of the ruling class must be counted the most subtle one of all — viz., social reform. The cleverest upholders of

class rule have always clearly realised that the safety of the State demands that reforms or sops should be granted to revolutionary movements. Hence the famous cry that "reform delayed is revolution begun."* The reform delays the revolution and saves the status quo. In Athens, as we have seen, the wily ruling class subsidised the poorer citizens; and in Rome the emperors fed the rebellious multitude and amused them with State-endowed circuses.

It is an interesting sidelight upon the nature of English Law and the State to study the attitude of these institutions regarding the enclosures. The misery produced by the enclosures moved even the pitiless Tudors to action to resist the enclosures and to assist the peasants. Energetic Tudor Statesmen like Wolsey and Somerset attempted to stem the evils arising from the transition of arable land into sheep runs. The Tudor kings from 1489 onwards passed Acts demanding that all land converted to pasture be restored to tillage. In 1517 the energetic Wolsey appointed a commission to compel all offenders to destroy their hedges. Proclamations and further Acts in 1534-6 demanded that enclosed land should be opened and the hedges destroyed. Not only did the Crown pass Acts against the enclosures, it also permitted preachers like Latimer to denounce the lords. Latimer said: — "Let the preacher despairingly preach till his tongue be worn to the stump, nothing is done." The peasants were restless, and their threat to revolt, which they eventually did, enforced the appointment of a fresh commission in 1548. One of the leading men of the commission woefully admitted that many laws had been passed, but all to no purpose. Even the Crown admitted in 1548 that its efforts had proved ineffectual. Somerset confessed that the demands of the peasants were fair and reasonable. It is one of the commonplace facts of history that the two Statesmen — Wolsey and Somerset — who struggled on behalf of the peasants were overthrown. The greatest opponent of Somerset was Earl Warwick, who was a notorious encloser.

These facts would seem, at first sight, to contradict our theory regarding the omnipotent power of the State. Three important points require to be understood before the ineffectiveness of the various legislative Acts can be grasped. The Crown and its Statesmen were concerned about the peasants, but it was for a definite reason. The fear of invasion and the lack of defence

through depopulation, caused by the enclosures, was the real reason why the Crown intervened on behalf of the peasants. A recent authority admits: — “The essential feature of Tudor legislation was to foster prosperity of the yeomanry, from whose ranks were recruited defenders of the realm.”* The most important point, however, is that the Crown could not enforce the Acts passed because these were administered by the landlords — a ruling section directly interested in the enclosures! It is generally assumed that the enclosures were popular, hence the failure of the many Acts put in operation against them. Mr. Lipson shows, in his highly instructive book, that the failure of the legislation against the enclosures “lies in the fact that the vigour of Tudor administration depended upon the loyalty and goodwill of the Justices of the Peace, the pivot of their local government. . . . The Justices, however, were the very men whose interests were so closely identified with the agricultural revolution.” ^ ^ In other words, the State was unable to enforce a decision in opposition to the best interests of a section of the ruling class. The peasants, so far as the land was concerned, had no legal status. Thus “the fundamental error of Tudor Statesmanship was the failure to give the English peasant a clear legal title to his holding . . . so long as the landlords were allowed to retain their legal rights all expedients to protect the tenantry were sheer palliatives.”*^

The Justices of Peace — the great landlords — were not only administrators of the Law, they were also judges and police magistrates. Any class other than the landed propertied class stood no chance of enforcing anything in opposition to a society so armed to defend its class interests. Every dominant class makes it part of its work to control the administration of the Law.

The enclosures movement brings out the class function of the State. While the legislation aimed at a section of the ruling interests could not be put into operation, the brutal legislation of Henry VIII. against the expropriated and propertyless was cruelly enforced.

The enclosures facilitated the rise of the rapidly growing capitalist farmer class. In the towns the merchants were becoming wealthy and consequently powerful. These two groups helped to form the political forces which were continually protesting against the tyranny of the State which was now

absolute in its power.

The economic strength of the Commons, composed of the merchants and the capitalist farmers, led them to demand a share in the control of the affairs of State. Thus, as the power of the new class increased, so in the same measure its political demands became more urgent. During the reign of Elizabeth the commercial interests made definite political demands. These demands became more insistent during the reign of the Stuarts. The conflict between the rising capitalist class and the Crown culminated in the execution of King Charles. The struggle between the feudal State and the political demands of the burghers, which is traced in the next chapter, will illustrate how the new propertied class, in its desire to control the State, was compelled to organise its forces within Feudalism in order to develop the requisite power to overthrow it and inaugurate the new society — Capitalism.

Thus are classes called upon to perform their historic mission.

REFERENCES

1. Woman UNDER Socialism — A. Bebel
2. Six Centuries of Work and Wages — Thorold Rogers (See also a valuable wages chart based on Roger's book and published in "Labour and Empire." S.L. Press, id.)
3. Evolution of States — J.M. Robertson.
4. Introduction to English History — Gardiner.
5. Constitutional Experiments — Jenks.
6. History of Parliament — Gneist.
7. History of Parliament — Gneist.
8. Cambridge Modern History — Cunningham.
9. War and Peace — Petris.
10. Puritanism — C. Meily (This small work is one of the finest contributions to Marxian theory of recent years.)
11. Dynamics of Religion (Wiseman) — J.M. Robertson.
12. Cambridge Modern History.
13. Capital — Karl Marx.

14. Economic History — Lipson.
15. Economic History — Lipson.
16. Economic History — Lipson.
17. England under the Stuarts — Trevelyan.

THE RISE OF THE CAPITALIST STATE

Towns and Guilds

The separation that took place between agriculture and handicraft led to the rise of craft and merchant guilds within the towns. The town, as Prof. Freeman has shown, was where the population was greater than at other places. It was generally the best defended part of the district, and was called a burg or walled town. This, no doubt, explains why the population tended to concentrate within the burg. Industry naturally drifted to the towns due to the facilities offered for the exchange and interchange of products. As the defence of the burg was part of the militaristic basis of Feudalism, the inhabitants of the town came under the domination of the local ruler, who might be a baron, a bishop, or a representative of the Crown.

The origin of the town may be traced back to the Mark — the territory of the tribe. As the tribal lands passed into the hands of the clan warriors and chieftain — now a lord — so the better defended parts, or place where the tribes exchanged their products, came under his domination. If the country was conquered by some alien warrior — as William the Norman conquered England — the estates were divided among the nobles, who sometimes found that a town was part of their estate. Just as the lord demanded tribute from the inhabitants of his landed estates, so he insisted upon the people within

the town contributing their share in the shape of tolls, pontage, and many other restrictions. The restrictions of the lord were found to be as irksome as were the exactions demanded by the Crown.

The presence of independent handicraftmen and traders in social evolution is explained; as due to the production of goods made to be exchanged for profit. Within the clan the aim of production was to satisfy certain given social needs. With the rise of private property the object of all economic activity changed to the production of goods for exchange, and therefore of private profit. The difference in the motive of production is much greater than is generally supposed. Communal production was only interested in producing use values; but with the rise of private property the aim of the labour-process is to create exchange values — i.e., commodities. Hence since the advent of private production all economic activity has been strained to produce goods, not because of their useful qualities, but because of the quantity of value in exchange which they will realise. Thus since the rise of the production of commodities the great point which has been the storm centre of economic theory has been the conception of value. At the early stage of Feudalism, before all the old influences of clan fraternity had been crushed out, the tendency of handicraftsmen was to retain some of the beauties of communal production. Thus the early guilds paid great attention to the beauty and the quality of the goods produced. But in the measure that Commercialism developed, so in the same ratio quality was sacrificed to quantity. And with the advent of Capitalism output of quantity became the aim of all economic activity.

Commerce and industry, unlike agriculture, require great mobility of movement. Therefore the tradesmen of the town demanded greater freedom of movement than was accorded the workers and serfs on the lord's landed estate. In order to effectively protest against the restrictions imposed upon them by the lord and the Crown, individual craftsmen and artisans found it necessary to combine in order to strengthen their demands. Thus arose the guilds which played so important a part in the municipal history of the Middle Ages. It was the very exclusiveness of its fraternal bond that made the guild a source of strength to its members; but it was its exclusive spirit that ultimately

destroyed it. To its members the guild was an organised brotherhood; to outsiders it was one of the best organised elements of resistance in the Middle Ages. The need for combination was demanded by the prevailing militarist character of Medieval Europe. But there also lingered the spirit of solidarity, which was one of the lingering remnants handed down from the recently destroyed tribal society. The old communistic spirit of the clan existed in the guilds, monasteries, parishes, corporations, and in many other institutions of the early Middle Ages. While these breathed the spirit of the clan, they also had the clanishness or exclusiveness which afterwards made them dangerously reactionary. In the zenith of their power these institutions produced the most glorious and beautiful works of art. The buildings and the architecture, the noble designs and miraculously devised carvings — all these, and more, illustrate the truth taught by William Morris that the essence of art is simply the sheer joy and delight manifested by the artisan employed in performing a congenial piece of work. The artistic triumphs of the Middle Ages are glowing tributes to the spirit of communism. They also prove beyond all confutation that there is latent in Humanity the ability to produce things of beauty given the economic environment wherein the spirit of solidarity and emulation can manifest itself.

The guilds performed a necessary social function by combining and unifying the handicraftsmen who were protesting against the exactions of Feudalism. But the guilds which had been the bulwark to protect industrial and commercial freedom became, with the extension of the productive forces, close corporations and monopolies which selfishly attempted to limit the freedom of action of others.* The struggle of the guilds against the demands of the lord and the king foreshadowed the fierce conflict that ended in the overthrow of Feudalism.

While industry was localised and production was carried on solely for adjacent markets, the political demands of the traders were for local or municipal freedom. Within the towns the aim of the traders was to bargain or win from the ruling class the freedom to trade — to produce and exchange goods — free from all feudal exactions. With the influx of precious metals, which lowered the purchasing power of money, the lords and king were sore

pressed for means to maintain their lavish and ostentatious displays and to wage their battles and feuds. Consequently they were ready to bargain with the traders and to transmute the feudal levies and tributes, demanded from the towns, into fixed sums of money. In this way many towns and burghs, or boroughs, attained self-government. In this way the trading members of the town or burgh became burghers, from which is derived the term bourgeoisie, signifying the trading merchant class. The burghers gained a series of privileges which fostered the growth of trade and facilitated the expansion of commerce. These privileges consisted of freedom from paying the various feudal imposts, such as tolls, market stallage, pontage, and rights of passage, etc. The very nature of these exactions reveal the anxiety and determination of the burghers to remove all obstacles that hampered the expansion of commerce. This fact brings into view the essentially conflicting nature of expanding Commercialism as compared with the decentralising and parochial aspect of hide-bound Feudalism. Feudalism, founded as it was upon landed tenure organised upon a military basis, was obviously local and rural. On the other hand. Commercialism, by its very nature, must leap over all local limits in its urgent need for continual expansion. The inner history of the overthrow of Feudalism is explained by the conflict between these two opposing economic tendencies. It is customary for certain historians to insist that social administration is necessarily a State function. The struggle of the guilds to control administration within the municipalities is clear proof that all forms of government are not synonymous with the State. The burghers keenly watched the struggle among the various elements of the feudal ruling class — the Crown, the Church, and the barons — and they tried to gain privileges by siding with this or that faction. On the whole the Church was the least ready to compromise with the traders. In the struggle for municipal freedom the bishops opposed most bitterly the demands of the burghers. Sometimes the conflict between the traders and the Church led to the latter threatening the former with excommunication. This, indeed, happened at Dunstable, where the burghers met the threat defiantly by declaring they would all “descend into Hell together.”^ Such facts as these explain the motives which led the merchants to enthusiastically support the

Reformation. The economic interpretation of the Reformation may also be applied to Puritanism. The small traders and merchants, like all small business men, found it necessary to practise thrift and economy in order to help them to accumulate capital. This enforced stinginess became the underlying basis of Puritanism. "The gaiety of the towns," says Mrs. Richard Green, "was already sobered by the pressure of business." The trading community could not indulge in the luxurious idleness of the barons and landed nobility. Thus not only were the economic interests of the landed nobility different from the merchants, but their religious and ethical ideals were different too. The "spirit" of Puritanism arises out of the economic needs of the rising capitalist class. The puritanical merchant loved to hear sermons couched in the terms of commerce. Indeed Puritanism teemed with commercial illustrations, and salvation itself looked very much like a bargain between two merchants — God and the trading Puritan.

The Crusades, the opening up of new sea routes following the invention of the nautical astrolabe, the growth of the woollen trade, the fall of Constantinople, and many other causes, facilitated the growth of trade. But commerce was hampered within the rural system of Feudalism. The new era of expansion required conditions which would not fetter the free movement of commerce within the nation or across the seas. Industry is essentially mobile. To confine it is to strangle it. The time had come when the local markets did not suffice to cope with the needs of the rapidly expanding industrial forces. The burghers and merchants had won the right to control the municipality in order to have the freedom to trade locally; the time had now arrived when, in consequence of industrial development, it was imperative for them to have national freedom and control the national political machine — the State. The economic needs of the burghers were organised into political demands*

The struggle between the burghers and the feudal State was extended over centuries. Beginning with mild protests and bargaining with the Crown, the traders won small and fragmentary concessions which were as incomplete as they were insecure. The policy of the Tudor monarchs was to keep friendly with the merchants and to grant them small favours in return for grants of

money. As the power of the Crown increased, due to the disappearance of the old baronial nobility and the removal of the influence of the Church, the demands for money increased. Time after time the Crown found it necessary to inform the Commons that they were growing too bold. Elizabeth informed them on one occasion in the House of Commons "that the privilege of this House consists therein, yea or nay to answer, but not to speak what to them seemed good, nor to say what came into their heads." With the growing economic power of the merchants their political demands became ever bolder. The trading spirit had also penetrated the farming class, which now began to chafe against the insecurity of its position. The capitalist farmers, by throwing in their lot with the traders, helped to broaden and deepen the elements of strife in revolt against the power of the State. So bold, indeed, were the Commons that the Crown called Parliament together as seldom as possible — and only then in order to get money.

The trading interests were now no longer the jealous local groups which looked upon merchants of other towns as a separate race or a hostile community. Their interests were linking them up and enthusing them with a national outlook. Foreign competition fostered the breakdown of local animosities within the nation. Commercial competition among the nations was slowly changing the feudal motive of war. The new national force behind militarism was commercial expansion. Thus at the height of the controversy between Catholicism and Protestantism, the commercial antagonism between Spain and England provoked the war between these two countries. This war, generally described as a religious one, was nothing of the sort. The English Catholics rode to Tilbury to resist the invasion. ^ A Catholic admiral, Lord Howard of Effingham, led the English fleet out to sea! ^ The war coalesced the manorial, parochial, or feudal conception of things, and gave the middle class a national outlook. The idea of local unity was giving way before the idea of national unity.

With the entrance of the Stuarts as controllers of the State the struggle between the Commons and the Crown became more intensified. It is characteristic of the development of revolutionary movements that the conflict becomes fiercer as the revolutionaries become economically more

powerful and better organised. Thus from the time of James I. to the revolution the Crown became more arrogant and brutal, and sought to thwart the demands of the Commons by the specious plea that the king ruled by "the divine right of God." With the extension of commerce the old-fashioned feudal restrictions became still greater hindrances to the progress of industry. No one below a yeoman's son could be apprenticed to a craft, and no one could set up in trade at will. The Crown controlled the regulation of trade with foreign countries; it had the right to impose duties at ports; it held the power to sell trading monopolies. The merchants bitterly complained that, due to the absence of a fleet, their ships were attacked. They also complained against the State's arbitrary method of taxation. The unrest and dissatisfaction among the burghers made itself heard because "the industrial population was becoming wealthy while the Crown was relatively poor."-* It was this difference in the respective power of the two forces which changed the political future of England. As the struggle between the traders and the Crown for the conquest of the State developed, the growth of the industrial process favoured the revolutionary class. It is one of the facts of social history that the revolutionary movement always fights with economic evolution in its favour; it is this advantage that explains why revolutions are carried through by enthusiastic minorities. The defenders of the old system have not only to contend against the propaganda of the opposition, they have to stand against social evolution. They have to oppose reality, which in the course of its development proves to be necessity.^ The revolutionary class, on the other hand, creates a series of ideals which have their roots in the crying needs of the economic evolutionary process fettered with the chains of an effete social system. Thus the cry of the traders in their onslaught on the Crown was for Freedom and Equality. To the merchants the demand for freedom and equality was genuine. Their very existence as a class was threatened. The State was enforcing the limitations of a social system which had now no useful function to serve in historic evolution, inasmuch as the very conditions which had made Feudalism so imperatively necessary had long since passed away. Industrial evolution had marched past the point wherein the stability of society required an agricultural-militaristic basis. Feudalism had not broken

down, as many writers assert; it had outlived its social function and had become an obstacle to further social progress. The feudal State, by enforcing a policy essentially rural at a time when a broad national policy was socially necessary, was acting as a fetter upon the evolving and expanding economic evolution. Like all played-out social systems, Feudalism had developed a serious contradiction; it was trying to confine an expanding commercial economy within the limits of an agricultural economy. The test of decadence in any social system is determined by its inability to enable the productive forces to evolve without hindrance. While Feudalism had no social function to serve, yet the State, dominated by the Crown and its landed nobility, was used to stupidly reinforce a series of social anachronisms. The industrial traders and capitalist farmers represented the new spirit which demanded freedom and equality. Many of them struggled heroically, no doubt, for an abstract ideal of freedom and equality, ignorant of the fact that at bottom the ideal was based on an economic bedrock. Language, it has been said, was given to Man to conceal his thoughts; so it would seem ideals have been invented to hide the economic bones of contention over which mankind struggles with all the passion and strength of the jungle breed. "Men" says Engels, "make their own history in that each follows his own desired ends independent of results, and the results of these many wills acting in different directions and their manifold effects upon the world constitute history. It depends, therefore, upon what the great majority of individuals intend. The will is determined by passion or reflection, but the levers which passion or reflection immediately apply are of different kinds. . . . The question arises: What driving forces stand in turn behind these motives of action; what are the historical causes which transform themselves into motives of action in the brains of agents?"* We can see the motive of action so far as the merchants and the capitalist farmers were concerned. They desired freedom and equality; but it was freedom to trade without restriction, and equality for all traders to send their goods into any market. We see, therefore, how economic needs become social and political ideals. A well-known critical historian has said regarding the will of men playing their part in history: — "Men are proximately ruled by their passions or emotions; and the supremacy of the economic factor consists

in its being, for the majority the most permanent director or stimulant of feeling.” And Prof. W. Cunningham admits that “the course of economic progress has always been closely linked with that of political change.”

In the struggle between the merchants and James I. an attempt was made to get all the hindering vexatious feudal rights of the King commuted for an annual sum of money. This negotiation — the Great Charter — was dropped, due to the mutual suspicion existing between the contending parties. Indeed the merchants had every reason to doubt the sincerity of the King. The activity of the Star Chamber, invested with the arbitrary powers of the State, showed how little sympathy the Crown had with the merchants. The Star Chamber, which was controlled by the judges of the Crown, had the power to crush any critic of the status quo. It had the power to summon anyone and mete out punishment as it pleased. It was “the Revolutionary Tribunal of Royalty,” and it had saved the State several times against rebels and uprisings. Following a series of violent acts on the part of the Star Chamber, against which the Commons protested, James I. warned them not “to treat of such matters, which went far beyond their sphere and capabilities, and not to mix themselves up in anything whatsoever that had to do with his government or his State secrets.” Against this declaration the determined Commons entered a protest, which the King tore from the journal of the House of Parliament. He also adjourned the Commons.

The growing contradictions between antiquated feudal restrictions and the needs of expanding commerce drove the merchants in 1621 to make a furious attack upon the Crown’s control of monopolies. The Crown by selling monopoly rights set up economic forces in opposition to the merchants. The Crown and the semi-feudal State were completely out of touch with the industrial tendencies of the age. They were non-capitalistic. By seeking to regulate production and distribution, quality and prices, the State was attempting to enforce the crude paternalism which is one of the distinguished features of the Middle Ages and early Feudalism. These restrictions enable us to understand why the capitalist class demanded “freedom” to produce and distribute commodities irrespective of locality and without any State interference regarding quality or price. To comprehend the difficulties and

restrictions thrown in the way of expanding industry by the Crown and State is to comprehend with what enthusiastic passion the merchants recited their capitalistic creed that "Competition is the life of trade." The Dutch, who had then reached the highest expression of early competitive Capitalism, was the ideal nation of the English merchants. Sir Josiah Child in his "New Discourse on Trade" brilliantly stated the case for his merchant colleagues. He insists on the right of capitalists to produce commodities irrespective of quality and price. He also says: — "If we intend to have the trade of the world, we must emulate the Dutch, who make the worst as well as the best of all manufactures, that we may be in a capacity of serving all markets and humours." So clamorous did the representatives of the merchants become that the most outspoken ones were imprisoned and threatened with execution. But Capitalism was now bent on controlling the State in its own interest. The merchants and capitalist farmers were now the economically dominant class in society, and they refused to be treated as a politically subject class. In order to facilitate its economic interests, the middle class had to secure political domination of the State. Guizot, the middle-class historian, dealing with the advent of the wealthy merchants, says: — "In towns, commerce and industry were rapidly advancing ; London acquired immense wealth; the King, the Court, and most of the great nobles of the Kingdom, always insolvent and greedy, became its debtors. . . . Agriculture prospered, the counties and towns were filled with a rich population, at once active and independent; and the revolution that had put into their hands so great a portion of the public wealth was so rapid that, in 1628, at the opening of Parliament, the House of Commons was three times as rich as the House of Lords." Hume also testifies to the latter statement. The political interests of the capitalist class were represented in Parliament by the merchant princes of London, Bristol, and Plymouth. Many of the other towns were represented by members drawn from the gentry, because the shopkeepers and the small business men thought their interests would be more respected thereby and, being small traders, they could not spare the time necessary to attend Parliament. Thus the Hampdens, Verneys, Wentworths, and Fairfaxes entered Parliament to defend the interests of Capital.

The strangling effects of the policy of the English State upon commercial expansion was plainly seen in the decrease of English shipping under Charles I. Not only was Spain a formidable competitor, but the small Republic of Holland was now a greater shipping nation than England. The English merchants were envious of the government possessed by the Dutch. "The Dutch State existed by commerce and for the protection of commerce," says Mr. Trevelyan in his study of the period. ^ But the English State was in the hands of a perfidious King surrounded by parasitic nobles and courtiers. The merchants complained most bitterly regarding their declining shipping trade, due to the alarming state of piracy. So ineffectual was the Navy that in seven years the English merchants lost no fewer than 466 trading ships; and English seamen were sold as slaves. Well indeed might the merchants think with M. Guizot that "with greater possessions, greater security became necessary." The capitalists and financiers had now more cause than ever to seek control of the State; they were paying taxes for the defence of the realm, but the State was not discharging its duties by protecting their property. Then, as it were, to show how insane tottering States become in the face of a revolutionary crisis, the Crown stupidly offended the nobles whom it might have rallied to its support. King Charles was "not content with alienating the nobles by imposing huge fines in revival of the forest laws, he incensed the Corporation of London by confiscating their estates in Ulster, conferred by his father, and levying a fine of £70,000 to boot for alleged breaches of charter. Besides selling many trade monopolies, he passed sumptuary laws, fixed the prices of poultry, butter, coals, and insisted on the incorporation of all tradesmen and artificers." ^ The growing antagonism to the King was summed up in the complaint quoted by Hallam that "in no part of the world, not even in Turkey, were the merchants so screwed and wrung as in England." But the climax was reached when the Royalist judge, Finch, declared during the trial of Hampden that the King could claim "their persons and goods, and I say their money too." In a last desperate attempt to reinforce the waning feudal State, Charles resorted to the historic method usually adopted by all reactionary rulers — he appealed to racial and religious hatreds by linking up his cause with that of the Catholics and by using the Irish against the rebels at home. In these

moves the King failed. By his measures he had frittered away the only force by which the State can compel the observance of its will — military power. “The immediate cause of the fall of Charles’s tyranny was the want of a military system.”^ On the day when he ventured to Parliament to demand the arrest of the five men who had challenged him, the King could only depend on a few adventurers — “cavaliers” — whom he tried to use to intimidate London and to terrorise the Commons. When the King realised that he was powerless to effect the arrest of the rebels he was compelled to fly to York, there to muster his forces. Meanwhile the Commons realised that the struggle would have to be decided by force, the midwife of revolution. True to the historic law of all revolutions, the Commons interpreted its own code of legality — not that of the King. Hence the militia organised to combat the Crown was technically unconstitutional. But revolutionary movements must move forward according to the conditions and needs necessary to uproot the social system which bars the way to social progress.

During the Civil War the Roundheads — the revolutionary arm^^ — was composed of men drawn from the merchant and industrial classes, and were led by landed gentlemen like Cromwell, “who were not deeply attached to the soil, who regarded their estates merely as assets in the money market.” Several lords joined the revolutionary army, but these were simply figureheads and were not motive forces. The financial strength and economic resources of the merchants, says Green, were fatal to the King in the coming war. Nothing in the revolution stands out so clearly as the economic might of the revolutionaries being utilised to back up their political right. Parliament itself could not have raised the forces to overthrow the feudal regime had not the towns rallied to the support of Capitalism in its struggle to capture the State. All the historical writers unwittingly concede this point. The Houses of Parliament could not have furnished the power to meet the King” had not London, containing ten times the population and more than ten times the ready money of any other city in England, supplied recruits by the thousand, war loans to any quantity and at any moment, and the best weapons that England or the Continent could furnish for money down.” ^ ^ By its ability to find money to pay the wages of the Navy, the Commons were able to

prevent the Royalists from blockading the Thames and breaking the source of the might of the revolutionaries by throttling the trade of London. The merchants by having the Navy on their side were able to hinder the Royalists in their efforts to get weapons from the Continent. The whole aim of the strategy of the King was to break the power of the merchants by laying siege to London, because he realised that without their economic power their political demands would collapse. The Royalists had to fight at a great disadvantage so far as material resources were concerned. The class and property aspect of the revolution emerges when the economic resources of the combatants are analysed. The merchants were able to transfer their commodities into cash to help the revolution. But the Royalists could not turn their landed estates into money so readily. The King had to depend on the rents and the silver plate of his adherents. And while the Royalists attacked trading centres the Roundheads directed a great deal of energy against castles — the last strongholds of dying Feudalism. The longer the Civil War lasted the more evident it became that the dwindling economic power of the Crown would be crushed by the growing economic strength of the merchant and capitalist farming class. The revolutionaries by their control of the political machine were able to use the rents of the Royal estates; the levies placed upon the goods secretly bought by the cavaliers, and the taxes gathered up and down the country to defeat the Crown. When, therefore, the opposing armies met at Naseby the superior army of Cromwell beat that of the King. The Civil War culminated in the execution of the King, who refused to accept the mandate of the revolution.

The flight of the King to organise an army to march against London clearly demonstrates that revolutions in themselves do not cause bloodshed. An examination of revolutionary periods will show that bloodshed is always caused by the counter-revolution — i.e., the action of the deposed regime attempting to overturn the revolution. No one desired a Civil War in England outside the ranks of Royalists; it was thrust upon the revolutionary party by the action of the King. The duplicity, intrigues, and treachery of Charles compelled Cromwell to carry out his threat against the King: — “We will cut off his head, with the Crown upon it.” Thus the revolutionary government

was established.

With the culmination of the “glorious revolution” in 1688, with the “Declaration of Rights” and the “Bill of Rights,” the Crown was vested in Parliament. Instead of the monarchy controlling the State it was the State which controlled the monarchy. The State was now in the hands of the landed-merchant class. During the next two centuries the activity of the State is a chronicle of the quarrels between the landed interests and the capitalist interests; the former was represented by the Tory party, the latter by the Whig party. Thus we see political parties are but the reflex of economic interests. The State had changed hands, but it was as bitter against the propertyless class as the State had been at any period in its history. Political representation was determined by a property status; the elected members represented, as before, certain constituencies — i.e., territorial areas. The capitalist revolution which established constitutional monarchy, which won freedom and equality for merchants, that destroyed the feudal restrictions which hampered economic evolution, brought no improvement in the lot of the propertyless class. But in so far as the advent of Capitalism was making for the socialising of the industrial processes, just in so far as the “glorious revolution” a great step forward in social progress.

REFERENCES

1. Economic History — Lipson
2. History of the English People — Green,
3. Dynamics of Religion (Wiseman) — J.M. Robertson.
4. CAMBRIDGE Modern History — W. Cunningham.
5. Fuerbach — Engels.
6. Fuerbach — Engels.
7. Evolution of States — J.M. Robertson.
8. England under the Stuarts — Trevelyan.
9. England under the Stuarts — Trevelyan.
10. Evolution of States — J. M. Robertson.
11. History of the English People — Green.

12. England under the Stuarts — Trevelyan.
13. England under the Stuarts — Trevelyan.

Note. — Ashley's book, "Economic History," gives the best account of the guilds, but the new work by Lipson, "Economic History," may be read with advantage on guilds and towns. The economic histories of Rogers, De Gibbin, Meredith, Warner, etc., clearly show the growth of industry. When the economic development is grasped, any of the political histories may be read.

RISE OF INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM

Consolidation of Capitalist State

The revolutionary middle class which had uprooted the feudal State, dominated by the Crown, did so on behalf of “freedom” and “equality.” We have already commented on the fact that by “freedom” the merchants and traders meant “freedom” to produce and sell commodities, and by “equality” the independent conditions necessitated by capitalists desiring a competitive system. Although the struggle was fought out in the name of freedom of thought and person and the equality of all members of the community, it is interesting to note that in the same year that Charles was executed the Revolutionary Government violated the ideals it had set out to establish. It gagged the press, silenced the pulpits, and endangered personal liberty. The persecution of John Lillburne, the political leveller, who advocated political democracy, demonstrates the point. Indeed the first act of the revolutionaries was to crush the levellers. Cromwell himself declared: — “You have no other way to deal with these men but to break them or they will break you.” The French Revolution is another illustration of the same fact. In France the bourgeoisie had no sooner captured the State than they brutally suppressed all criticism and declared against combinations of Labour. A close reading of the English and French middle class revolutions will show how similar the two

events were in outline. If more blood was spilled in France than in England it was not due to “national characteristics,” but was due to a difference in the political conditions under which the respective revolutions were carried out. England had not the armies of Europe threatening her frontiers, as was the case with France, nor had she as powerful a landed nobility to contend with. When put to it, the English ruling class has shown itself as inhuman as any other ruling class. The notorious barbarities of Cromwell in Ireland, involving the massacre at Drogheda and the enslavement of those spared, is a case in point. In the same country, “during 1796 and 1797, the licence of the undisciplined ‘troops,’ the tortures, the burnings, floggings, shootings in cold blood, in which women and girls were not spared, make a sickening record. In the name of law, security, and religion, the anti-Jacobin government of Ireland and its agents showed that it could match the excesses of a Committee of Public Safety or the Revolutionary Tribunal at Paris.” ^

The capitalist class in England, during its struggle to conquer the State and wrench it from the power of a semi-feudal monarchy, violently changed the form of government three times within a century. Towards the end of the seventeenth century there took place the execution of a King, the rise and fall of the Commonwealth, the restoration of the Stuart monarchy and its overthrow, the making and breaking of Alliances with European Powers (firstly to smash Holland with the help of France and then to crush France with the help of Holland), the reign of terror at the time of the Popish Plot, and Civil War in England, Ireland, and Scotland. Here, indeed, are stubborn facts for the historians who attempt to explain English social evolution in the terms of racial or national characteristics. A keen student in summing up the events of the latter part of the seventeenth century, says: — “Foreign observers might well be justified in pronouncing the English people singularly fickle, unstable, turbulent, treacherous, and vindictive”.* These qualities are, according to our nationalist and imperialistic historians, the special characteristics of “foreigners.”

Regarding the fact that the English and French middle class afterwards repudiated the ideals which sustained them in their straggle with the feudal monarchy, it is necessary to say a few words. Mr. Trevelyan, in commenting

on the above, says: — “All revolutionists the moment they undertake the actual responsibilities of government become in some sort conservative.” No one who has studied revolutionary periods can deny the charge. But the explanation is perfectly simple. Ever since the rise of private property, with its class conflicts, and the need for a State, political revolutions have been property revolutions, and consequently class revolutions. The burgers and traders of England destroyed the semi-feudal State, controlled by the Crown, in order to remove the irksome restrictions which hindered the expansion of industrial development. Previous to the overthrow of Charles, the merchants and traders were members of a subject class — i.e., not an enslaved class. In order to become a ruling class they had to capture the machinery of government by overthrowing the status quo. To accomplish this the subject class had to become revolutionary in aim — i.e., to destroy the old and build up the new. When a subject class captures the State it becomes the ruling class, and thereupon uses the State to enforce its will upon society and to further its economic interests. Thus the moment the new system is established it must be protected by the new ruling class against the deposed class and against the propertyless elements. Hence it becomes essentially conservative in its role of protector of the new status quo. The middle class historians, unable to perceive the historic function of the State, and being blind to the economic basis of the class struggle, are unable to grasp why it is that a subject and propertied class must, in order to emancipate itself, become politically triumphant in order to enable its economic interests to triumph by the removal of all impediments. So far, in class society, the triumph of a subject class has never meant the emancipation of every member of the community. This is due to the fact that while the struggle for political control has always been waged between a subject and a ruling class, these classes have always been propertied classes. But beneath the subject propertied class there has always been an enslaved propertyless class. Never in the history of civilisation has the emancipation of a subject class meant the emancipation of the enslaved class. Therefore, even though a subject class captures the State, it must conserve its interests against the propertyless class which stands beneath it. History records the fact that when a subject class becomes the ruling class

it is prepared to compromise with the old ruling class in order to consolidate all the propertied interests of society against the interests and demands of the propertyless. Thus in England, after the revolution, the landlord and capitalist class joined hands in order to prevent their propertied interests and differences weakening their power in the face of a propertyless mass, which during the eighteenth century, goaded by hunger and tyranny, threatened to revolt. The Whigs and Tories — i.e., the capitalists and landlords — had many bitter quarrels, caused by their conflicting economic interests, but in so far as opposition to the propertyless workers was concerned there was practically no difference in the policy of the Whigs and Tories. Indeed, whatever was gained at a later date by the workers, politically or industrially, had to be torn from either the one or the other. In Greece and Rome there was a class struggle between the landed nobility and the merchants, but this conflict of interests meant nothing to the slaves. Under Feudalism the struggle between the burghers and the feudal nobility made little difference to the serf. In capitalist society, however, the case is different. This is due to the fact that the mobility of modern capitalist industry demands “free” workers. Thus the modern wage labourers differ from all previous working classes in history: they are both an enslaved and a subject class. For the first time in history a propertyless class takes the field as a revolutionary class seeking to dethrone its exploiters. When the revolutionary working class captures the State, when it overthrows Capitalism, it will not, like all previous revolutionary classes, use the State to enforce its will upon either a subject or an enslaved class. Since the working class is both an enslaved and a subject class, and since there is no lower class in society its emancipation will mean the emancipation of all classes. The triumph of the proletarian revolution will mean true economic and political freedom; it will mean the abolition of the State because it will mean the abolition of all classes and propertied conflicts.

The opening of the eighteenth century finds the monied class exercising great influence over the activities of the State. “The diplomacy of governments were placed at the disposal of commerce,” says Professor Ingram in his “History of Political Economy.” The literature of the period clearly shows that the merchant class had become powerful in every field of social activity.

Defoe remarked that in England trade makes a gentleman, and that their "children come to be as good gentlemen, statesmen, parliament men, judges, bishops, and noblemen as those of the highest birth and the most ancient families." And Swift said: — "Let any man observe the equipages in this town; he shall find the greater number of those who make a figure to be a species of men quite different from any that were ever known before the Revolution, consisting either of generals and colonels or of those whose whole fortunes lie in funds and stocks." He also remarked "that the power which used to follow land had gone over to money." "Must our laws," said Swift, "from henceforth pass the Bank* and East Indian Company, or have their royal assent before they are in force? "Foreigners were particularly impressed with the powerful influence exercised by the capitalist merchants. Shortly after the rise of the commercial class to political power it carried out the following reforms: the establishment of the Bank of England, the extension of the Charter of the East Indian Company, the beginning of the National Debt which guaranteed a safe investment, the restoration of the currency which had been debased by the monarchy, and the building of a fleet strong enough to protect merchant ships and to challenge Holland, the greatest sea-trading nation of the time. These measures show how necessary political control was to the capitalists in order to extend their economic interests. "The same qualities," says a capitalist apologist, "which gave them political freedom gave them also free enterprise in industry and commerce."* We here again observe the dynamic force behind the merchants' political agitation on behalf of "freedom."

Throughout the eighteenth century the political activities of the State witnessed a severe struggle between the landed and financial interests. The century is remarkable for its many wars caused principally by the hunger for colonies and markets required by the rapidly expanding industry of the country, and the desire to prevent and powerful nation from occupying the coastline of Belgium.*'^ The Tories of the eighteenth century, representing the landed interests, were on the whole opposed to the imperialism of the merchants; the former complained about the pressure of taxation, and the latter looked to war as a means of floating profitable loans and extending trade. In order to curb the power of the monied interests the Tories passed an

Act (1711) preventing merchants from sitting in Parliament who did not draw at least three thousand pounds annually from land. Despite the disabilities thrown in the way of parliamentary representation by an obsolete electoral system, the merchants had no trouble in influencing the State. They were able to exact terms from various Governments by financing their policy through the Bank of England and National Debt. At the beginning of the eighteenth century they were able to buy up constituencies by indulging in wholesale bribery; and early in the nineteenth century the anachronisms of electoral representation were overcome by the sheer force of economic power moving in corrupt channels. "A seat could be bought at a known price as easily as a ticket for the opera or the lottery or the stock of the National Debt." In the same way peerages could be bought. The landlords, or Tories, no doubt had the electoral system in their political interests; but it has been well said: — "When seats were recognised as marketable commodities, those who had amassed wealth in manufactures and commerce were able to bid effectively for a place in the House of Commons." The influence of Capitalism was stamped upon the State when in the King's speech (1721) it was said: — "Thus it was in commerce that the riches and grandeur of this nation chiefly depended." The revolution of 1688 had not only been "glorious" so far as the trading interests were concerned, it had been, as Chateaubriand aptly said, "useful." The political philosophers of the revolution duly discussed the basis of the State. Hobbes said it was power, and Harrington declared that it was property. Wren summed up both points by showing that the one comes to the other.

The Colonial System

The revolution which had made the merchants and landlords supreme in the State was used to extend the interests of these propertied groups. While the merchants had fought the monarchy to win "equality" and "freedom," it is interesting to note that neither freedom nor equality were extended to the workers at home nor to the people of other nations. The State gave the East India Company commercial control of India. This company of

unscrupulous financiers was even granted State powers in India — i.e., it had the Sovereign power to make laws and enforce them by armed force. We have here a vivid illustration of the fact that the State expresses and enforces the will of property. There is no more tragic tale in the history of commercial greed than the brutalities perpetrated by the East India Company upon the Hindus. By commercially organised famines the natives were killed by hunger. Small wonder that the British and French commercial interests fought so bitterly against each other for the monopoly of the Indian trade. The colonial system of Christian Europe is a disgusting study. In a book entitled “Colonisation and Christianity,” by Mr. W. Howitt, we read: — “The barbarities and desperate outrages of the so-called Christian race, throughout every region of the world, and every people they have been able to subdue, are not to be paralleled by those of any other race, however fierce, however untaught, and however reckless of mercy and of shame, in any age of the earth.” During a quarrel with the Puritans of New England, who had emigrated from England, the British Government paid redskins to tomahawk the descendants of the pious pilgrim fathers. And “the British Parliament proclaimed bloodhounds and scalping as means that God and Nature had given into its hands.”** The cant phrase “God and Nature” was a favourite one, and was used by most of the British Statesmen during the eighteenth century in furthering the interests of commerce. Thus Pitt used it against Spain in 1739; he used it again in 1776 and 1789. By this appeal to “God and Nature” the merchants achieved many things “which were baptised in torrents of blood.” ^ And Edmund Burke declared that “the laws of commerce are the laws of nature, and therefore the laws of God.” ^ “At a later period, during the agitation of Bright and Cobden for free trade. Dr. Bowring said that “Jesus Christ is free trade and free trade is Jesus Christ.” ^^ True to the laws of “God and Nature,” the British merchants ruined the commerce of Ireland and reduced the people to a state of helplessness and starvation. And, as though to add insult to injury, many modern historians and politicians have attempted to explain the “failure,” “rebellions,” and “suspicion” of the Irish as something peculiarly racial. Due to its geographical position, lying close to the European markets and westwards towards America, the

English merchants looked upon Ireland as a potential competitor, while the English landlords always distrusted Ireland because they regarded it as a basis from which an enemy could attack England. Ireland has been the victim of a dominating English commercial class. Its economic and geographical environment explains the political and religious disturbances of the island. By a series of commercial laws the English State prohibited Ireland to trade; her harbours were closed to imperial commerce; her farmers were prevented from exporting wool, and the capitalists were forbidden to manufacture it. The British shippers, manufacturers, and farmers were, in plain English, a gang of conspirators using their National State to strangle the commercial and agricultural potentialities of a smaller nation. To the Irish this was the work of Protestants. Thus the economic antagonism between the two nations helped to produce a religious antagonism, by making Ireland the breeding-ground of Roman Catholicism. Likewise, in America, the colonial policy of the British merchants provoked the war of independence. "The Colonial system," says Marx, "ripened, like a hothouse, trade and navigation. The colonies secured a market for the budding manufactures, and, through the monopoly of the market, an increased accumulation" (of capital). "The treasures captured outside Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement, and murder, floated back to the mother country and were turned into capital." In these things we can see an additional reason why the monied interests found it imperative to destroy the semi-feudal State at home in order to control the army, navy, and taxation, and to use these State-controlled institutions as instruments to expand and develop the forces of capital.

During the eighteenth century, so bent was the capitalist class on imperial expansion, that little legislative work was accomplished. The energies of the most brilliant of the capitalist and landlord Statesmen were directed towards consolidating the State. Thus, due to the rapid expansion of an industrial nation, with its numerous wars and expenditure, the Treasury Department slowly emerges as the central organ of State administration, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer becomes one of the great officers of State. Under the pressure of new political needs for economic ends, most of the present-day State committees were evolved. Hence the Cabinet arises

as the motive power in the State of the politically dominant section of the nation. As the executive committee of the propertied interests the Cabinet assumes the Sovereign power of the nation. Prior to the Revolution many of the officers of the semi-feudal and monarchical State were personal attendants of the King. These offices lose their administrative and social importance and become merely ornamental and honorary. It was a fortunate thing for the development of the British State that the first two Georges were foreigners, who had great difficulty in speaking and understanding the English language. George I. surrendered one of the last privileges of the Crown when he ceased to sit in the Cabinet. During the riotous and turbulent period of the Industrial and French Revolutions, George III. attempted to claim several privileges. It is a point worth noting that the capitalist class in capturing the State seeks to destroy the powers of the Crown; but with the advent of the proletarian revolutionary movement the capitalists and landlords seek to throw a halo round the head of their ornamental but powerless monarch. This is caused by the desire of the threatened property rulers to create an additional buffer between the wage-earners and their emancipation.

So successfully did the Whigs — who were in power for an unbroken period of 50 years — do their work in consolidating the State on behalf of the propertied interests, that when the Tories at last assumed power they did not seek to carry through counter measures on behalf of the Crown, but used the State to protect the landed interests. During the eighteenth century the British propertied class evolved that parliamentary system which afterwards became the model of most of the commercial States founded in Europe.

Although the monied and commercial interests had great influence in the State, nevertheless the capitalist class had not thoroughly finished its revolutionary work. Most of its political influence was of an indirect sort exerted by sheer pressure of its economic power. Up and down the country in the new industrial centres there were springing up numberless small manufacturers who, due to the obsolete electoral system, were not qualified to vote. It was the arbitrary manner in which constituencies were mapped out that led to the monied interests buying up votes and electoral districts. Corruption was caused by the anachronisms of the electoral laws. Towards

the end of the eighteenth century the smaller capitalists agitated for the extension of the franchise. Their political propaganda founded the Radical party. But as the early Radicals were closely connected with the workers' movement, we intend to deal with them in our next section.

The Rise of the Modern Working Class

During the eighteenth century an important development in the evolution of the working class — called by historians “The freeing of the workers” — took place. We have repeatedly drawn attention to the mobility required by commerce and commodity production. Industry also requires a mobile working class — i.e., a mass of labourers who can be moved up and down the country according to the exigencies of production. It was part of the work of the capitalist class to furnish industry with a mass of “free” labourers. It is interesting to watch how the “freeing” process was accomplished.

After the Peasants' Revolt (1381), serfdom, which tied the serf-labourer to the lord's estate, had almost disappeared. According to Macaulay: — “The petty proprietors who cultivated their own fields with their own hands enjoyed a modest competence. If we may trust the best statistical writers of that age, not less than 160,000 proprietors, who, with their families, must have made up more than a seventh of the whole population, derived their subsistence from little freehold estates. . . . It was computed that the number of persons who tilled their own land was greater than the number of those who farmed the land of others.” ^^ Many of those who did not own farms of their own worked as wage-labourers for someone, and also worked on their own piece of land, which generally was of 4 acres; they also had access to the common lands. Prof. Thorold Rogers, in “Six Centuries of Work and Wages,” described the condition of the agricultural population in the fifteenth century as the “golden age of English Labour.” We have already examined the great enclosures movement which took place at the end of the fifteenth century, and which hurled a mass of propertyless workers on to the roads of the country and into the towns and cities. The filching of the people's land plunged the agricultural population of England, “without any

transition, from its golden into its iron age." The expropriation of the country workers from the land was further extended when the rapacious nobility despoiled the great feudal estates of the Catholic Church at the time of the Reformation. These estates were taken over by royal courtiers, who sold them to speculating capitalist farmers, who drove the population in swarms off the lands. William Cobbett, in his "History of the Protestant Reformation," provides valuable data which shows the greed of the "spiritual" forces behind the Reformation, and also what it meant to thousands of luckless workers. During the eighteenth century the enclosures mined the yeomen of England, the men who had played so heroic a part in Cromwell's revolutionary army. Between the years 1702 and 1810 Parliament passed no less than 3,042 enclosure Acts. These Acts expropriated from the workers 2,500,000 acres of arable land and 1,750,000 acres of "waste." These figures do not include enclosures which were not sanctioned by Parliament. Small wonder that the "enclosures had combined to dislocate, and in some cases extinguish altogether, two classes of the old order — the yeoman and the cottager." Between 1801 and 1831 Parliament facilitated the stealing of 3,511,770 acres of common land from the agricultural population. It is well to observe that the defenders of the enclosures take up the position that the expropriation of the land was justified by social necessity. Mr. C. Grant Robertson, in "England under the Hanoverians," argues: — "That as a whole enclosure was inevitable, the indispensable condition and the result of more scientific and economic agriculture; that in the long run it added enormously to the productive resources of the nation; that without it the new population could not have been fed, the industrial revolution stimulated, and the strain of the great war endured, is generally accepted." Our authority, while revelling in sympathy for the dispossessed, makes no reference to the "sacred" rights of property and the violation of "individual" rights. The history of the enclosures provides the historic precedent that when any class in society has political power, enforced by industrial organisation, it may expropriate the property of any other class in the interests of society.

We see, therefore, that the expropriation of the agricultural population "freed" a great mass of workers who had no other resource than to offer

themselves as wage-earners in the rapidly growing industrial districts.

In the towns and villages a great number of workers maintained themselves by domestic manufacture and by working partly on the land. These workers were supplied with raw materials by the merchants. So long as industry was in its handicraft stage these cottage workers were able to live in relative comfort. But they were ruined by a twofold process. "While the enclosures deprived the day labourer of a solace, often a resource, they completed the ruin of the manufacturing cottagers." The domestic handicraftsmen slowly came under the domination of the merchants who supplied them with raw materials. With the rise of large workshops, wherein great numbers of workers were employed, and in which the labour process was subdivided and intensified, a corresponding cheapening in production naturally resulted, against which the smaller domestic producers could not compete. These domestic craftsmen were ruined and they were compelled to join the ranks of the "free" labourers. By such means as those outlined above there appeared upon the social stage the modern working class — a mass of propertyless proletarians who, in order to live, were "free" to sell themselves to the owners of the means of wealth-production, the capitalist class. So long as the workers in the handicraft or domestic stage of industry saw any possibility of becoming masters a working-class movement was impossible. In the period preceding the Industrial Revolution the tools and implements of production were easily acquired, and it was a simple matter to become a master. But with the rise of the factory system — with the opening of huge factories containing highly expensive, complex machines — with the beginning of industrial Capitalism, it became practically impossible for a wage-earner to become a factory owner. The respective class and position of capitalist and wageworker became almost as rigid as a caste; each was indeed a status. It is from the beginning of the factory system, therefore, that we get the bona-fide modern working-class movement. The capitalist class in its great achievement of having destroyed within society the power of the old feudal nobility, let loose the elements which created its great class antagonist — the proletariat. Thus, as Engels says, the capitalist class had no sooner extricated itself from the power of the landed nobles than it was dogged by the shadow of the wageearning class.

The great activity of the capitalist class in the eighteenth century was pregnant with the events which made possible the industrial Capitalism of the nineteenth century. Its great historic work during the eighteenth century consisted in establishing and consolidating the parliamentary State at home and in extending the Empire abroad. The capitalist class assisted the landlords to expropriate the workers from the land, by means of which the latter got the lands and the former got the “hands.” These things made possible and facilitated the advent of the Industrial Revolution, which in its turn socialised the labour process whereby all economic wealth is created — and it also meant the triumph of Man over nature. These achievements may be considered the historic mission of the capitalist class and its social contribution to humanity. Thus the capitalist class, by concentrating and centralising the instruments of wealth production, made possible the social production of wealth. But the capitalist class did more; it brought into being the working class, whose great mission it is to socialism the distribution of the socially produced wealth.

REFERENCES

1. See French Revolution— Prof. Aulard (the best work on the subject).
Also BABEUFF — Belfort Bax.
2. England under the Hanoverians — C. Grant Robertson.
3. England under the Hanoverians — C. Grant Robertson.
4. Principles of Economics — Marshall.
5. England under the Hanoverians — Robertson.
6. England under the Hanoverians — Robertson.
7. Historical Basis of Modern Europe — Weir.
8. Capital — Marx.
9. England under the Hanoverians — Robertson.
10. Capital — Marx.
11. Free Trade (published as appendix to “Poverty of Philosophy”) — Marx.
12. Capital — Marx.
13. History of England — Macaulay.

14. England under the Hanoverians — Robertson.
15. Historical Basis of Modern Europe — Weir.
16. The reader Avill find this clearly worked out in Outlines of the History of the British Working-Class Movement — W.W. Craik

MODERN CAPITALISM

The foreign policy of Pitt, who used the financial power of Britain to subsidise the European States to fight against each other, resulted in Britain, due to her geographical position, being almost the only country in Europe wherein industry proceeded unmolested. So great was the demand for English goods that it was impossible to produce them quickly enough. The difficulty lay not in finding raw materials, because Engels shows that it was impossible to work up the large stores of wool then on hand. A great subdivision of labour took place before the introduction of the steam engine. The manufacturing system — which must not be confused with the factory system — begins by speeding up and intensifying the productive capacity of the labourer. On the other hand, the great Industrial Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century begins with a revolution in the tools of production. With the invention of Watt's steam engine industry entered into its new period. This new and powerful driving force was able to drive the tool or machine — a machine being simply a complex tool working at an extraordinary speed. The invention of Watt's engine made possible the utilisation of the great mineral deposits of Britain. Then began the great shifting of the population to the parts of the country where industry could be best conducted. Here we observe, again, the mobile nature of industry and the need for a "free" or mobile population. "From 1770 onwards a student with a geological map and some knowledge of the economic data of the new trades might have

predicted a priori not where the industrial centres might be, but where they must be."

The productive capacity of Britain leaped forward at a phenomenal rate. The revolution in the methods of commodity production made it possible for the British capitalist class to undersell every other country in the world. Britain became the workshop of the world. Not only were foreign manufacturers undersold; at home the smaller capitalists, unable to compete with the great machine industry, were crushed, and their numbers helped to swell the ranks of the proletariat. The immediate benefits of the Industrial Revolution increased the economic power of the capitalist class. The workers, whose capacity to create wealth was greater than at any previous period, were beaten and battered down to the lowest level, relatively speaking, ever experienced in the history of English Labour. Modern economists argue that an increase in national wealth is shared by the workers. The conditions of the workers at the opening of the nineteenth century prove that the workers' share of wealth is not determined by the amount of national wealth, but by the price which they, as sellers of the commodity, labour-power, obtain in the shape of wages on the labour market. At no period in social evolution was the truism so apparent that riches are but the obverse side to poverty. The Venetian Monk, Ortes, an acute student of economics, says: — "The abundance of wealth with some people is always equal to the want of it with others." Another writer — Storch — speaking of the workers, says: — "The progress of social wealth begets this useful class of society which performs the most wearisome, the vilest, the most disgusting functions, which takes, in a word, on its shoulders all that is disagreeable and servile in life, and procures thus for other classes leisure, serenity of mind, and conventional dignity of character." "Thanks to the advance of industry and science," says Sismondi, "every labourer can produce every day much more than his consumption requires. . . Exertion to-day is separated from its recompense; it is not the same man that first works and then reposes; but it is because the one works that the other reposes. . . . The indefinite multiplication of the productive powers of labour can then only have for result the increase of luxury and enjoyment of the idle rich."^ And Sismondi also says: — "It can almost be

said that modern society lives at the expense of the proletarians on what it keeps out of the remuneration of labour." At a later period in the nineteenth century Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons (1843) admitted: — It is one of the most melancholy features in the social state of this country that we see, beyond the possibility of denial, that while there is at this moment a decrease in the consuming powers of the people, an increase of the pressure of privations and distress, there is at the same time a constant accumulation of wealth in the upper classes, an increase of the luxuriousness of their habits, and of their means of enjoyment." At the same period Prof. H. Fawcett declared: — "The rich grow rapidly richer, whilst there is no perceptible advance in the comfort enjoyed by the industrial classes." At the beginning of the twentieth century the social relation between the workers and the property owners had widened. In the year 1909 Mr. Lloyd George said: — "It is rather a shame for a rich country like ours — probably the richest country in the world, if not the richest country the world has ever seen — that it should allow those who have toiled all their days to end in penury and possibly starvation."

Such were the conditions created by the Industrial Revolution. The development of Capitalism makes the position of the workers ever less secure. The workers bereft of their small patch of land were completely at the mercy of the owners of the means of life. The wageearners instinctively realised that they would have to defend their own interests. Thus we trace the rise of trade unions from the middle of the eighteenth century. As the Industrial Revolution proceeded and crushed out the small handicraftsmen, riots and strikes occurred, and machines were smashed by the "Luddites." In the years 1799-1800 Acts were passed which prohibited the right of the workers to combine. At the opening of the nineteenth century the workers' struggle against the State was reinforced by the political agitation of the Radicals, who demanded the extension of the franchise and the reform of the electoral system. The Radicals, assisted by men like Cobbett, Paine, Hume, Place, etc., fought on behalf of the small property owners who had no vote. By linking up their cause with that of the workers, who were seeking the right to combine, the Radicals incidentally strengthened their own movement.

During the Napoleonic wars the British State was too busy fighting for “freedom” abroad to tolerate political and economic demands for freedom at home. The capitalists resented the combination of workers in unions because it interfered with profits; the landlords bitterly opposed the demands of the Radicals because they feared the stability of the constitution was threatened. The period was a reign of terror. The policy of Pitt and Castlereagh was one of brutality and oppression. Small wonder that Adam Smith said: — “Whenever the Legislature attempts to regulate the differences between masters and their workmen, its counsellors are always the masters.” The demands of the workers for the rights of industrial organisation, and the demands of the Radical political reformers were met with abuse and persecution. The success of the French Revolution made the Government most tyrannical against the so-called revolutionaries at home.

It was claimed in the King’s speech (1st December, 1793) that a desperate conspiracy was on foot to destroy the Constitution and uproot law and order. It is also worthy of note that the despotism of the State increased during the French wars (1793-1815). A series of Acts were enforced — some passed as “temporary” were in operation for 32 years! The Habeas Corpus Act was suspended (1794); the Treasonable Practice Acts destroyed the right of free speech, printing, and writing, (this Act empowered the Government to imprison anyone, and there was no need for proof or evidence against the accused). The Seditious Meetings Acts empowered any magistrate to break up a public meeting; the introduction of stamp duties increased the price of papers, and a keen censorship controlled printers. The fear that the working class, which becomes active from this time, might organise industrially led to the passing of an act making trade combinations or unions illegal. Political societies were suppressed by a law which placed reading-rooms and debating clubs in the same category as brothels. The period was notorious for the brutal sentences meted out by the State to serious and zealous reformers. State-endowed judges and Crown lawyers, “scavenging in the reports of spies and agents provocateurs,” sentenced men for alleged “conspiracy.” Many honest workers were imprisoned, transported, and executed on trumped-up evidence. For criticising Russian tariffs three men were tried before Lord

Kenyon. There were undoubted rumblings of revolt, but it was worked up by the insane persecution of the State. Despotism was defended upon the grounds that it was necessary in order to enable the Government to prosecute the war. But the "enemy" which seemed to attract the energy of the Government, and which Pitt savagely prosecuted, was the band of men at home striving to defend elementary liberty of thought, speech, and action. The State feared the workers and the Radicals. It therefore utilised its power to crush their propaganda. Those who attacked the Radicals for seeking to destroy the Constitution practically did away with the Constitution in order to root up Radicalism. Sir Erskine May said that the Constitution had been suspended.

After the Napoleonic wars the smaller capitalists — the middle class— became active in the agitation for political reform and the extension of the franchise. This was merely a conflict between the landed and capitalist interests. By granting the vote to the middle class the power of industrial capital was strengthened against the power of the landlords. It was the former who, with the aid of the workers, backed up that contentious measure the famous Reform Bill of 1832. The workers were not merely left out, they were, as Mr. McCarthy says, "shouldered out." A few years later the Chartist movement was organised. The hope of the working-men Chartists lay in the desire to secure political reform as a means to improving their economic position. It was the early fusion of the middle class and the workers which taught the latter to look to the State as a means of having their grievances redressed. Unfortunately this middle-class idea is prevalent to-day and has been propagated by many who call themselves Socialists.

The rapacity of the capitalist class, however, forced the wage-earners to throw up defensive organisations in the shape of trade clubs and trade unions. It is a fact worth noticing that, while Capitalism was in its *laissez faire* period, and while it was theoretically opposed to State intervention, the capitalist class was always eager to use the State against the workers. The new factory system presented a series of workshop problems which the capitalists dealt with privately. So long as the individual masters had the power to successfully combat Labour's demands in the workshop, the capitalists did not seek the

aid of the State. As soon, however, as the workers became rebellious the masters used the State to protect their propertied interests and to restore "order." When it was a matter of Free Trade, in order to get cheaper labour-power the Manchester school of capitalists, who so resolutely opposed State intervention where their own interests were involved, were as "eager for State interference as any modern middle-class Fabian. Despite their criticism of State intervention, the capitalists during the *laissez faire* period always looked upon the State as a glorified policeman for keeping the workers in subjection.

The growth of Britain's commercial supremacy required the free importation of raw materials necessary for an industrial and manufacturing nation. The desire to lower the cost of subsistence and to thus lower wages led to the introduction of cheap corn. The economic interests and the expansion of British Capitalism therefore manifested itself in the political struggle for Free Trade and the Repeal of the Corn Laws. The passing of these Acts was the triumph of the capitalist interests over the interests of the landlords. Despite these political reforms the workers were still dissatisfied. The Liberals had sought to pacify the workers by contending that the Repeal of the Corn Laws and introduction of Free Trade were reforms inaugurated in the interests of Labour. It was difficult for the wage-earners to reconcile the "reforming" zeal of the Liberals with their virulent opposition to the Factory Acts and Trade Unions. On the other hand, the landed interests strove to gain the support of the workers by passing the Ten Hours Bill and the Factory Acts. The two sections of the ruling class were eager to pacify the workers by passing reforms at each other's expense. Thus factory owners like Cobden and Bright were quite willing to repeal the Corn Laws at the expense of the landlords; whereas the rack-renting Lord Shaftesbury was enthusiastic regarding a shorter working day in factories, but was not so keen about the conditions of agricultural workers. The granting of reforms, like the Education Acts, made the workers more efficient wealth producers. Likewise the granting of a limited suffrage to male householders of the working class fostered the belief that the State was the institution which could aid Labour. This also led to the superficial theory, advocated by sentimental Labourists,

“that the State is the people.”

Following the repeal of the Corn Laws and the introduction of Free Trade, British Capitalism was able to undersell every other manufacturing country. So phenomenal was the expansion of British industry, so great was the demand for British products, that the industrial machine was worked at high pressure. The capitalists were making such large profits that it did not pay them to quarrel with the wealth-producing wage-earners. During this period the theory that the interests of Capital and Labour are identical was promulgated; the larger trade unions were founded with their cry of a “fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work,” and that combination meant “defence not defiance”; while the middle class permeated the working-class movement with its bourgeois ideas on social reform. To the reformer the wages system seemed to be a desirable state of society; it only required to be reformed, or at best slightly modified. In this way trade unionism received its purely capitalistic conceptions and ideas; and the Labour movement assimilated theories which looked upon the wages system as the highest expression of social perfection.

With the unification of the German States, with the industrial advance of France after 1871, with the rapid development of America, Britain began to realise that it would be necessary to fight to retain her position in the world’s markets. In 1876 the more important capitalist nations, seeking an outlet for their surplus goods, commenced that struggle for new markets which, from that year to this, became more and more menacing to the preservation of peace. At first the competition was of an easy kind; but as capital in the various countries centralised and concentrated, as production leaped forward with increasing bounds, in the same measure the struggle became fiercer between the competing nations. The rapid development of the iron and steel trade, with its demand for mineral lands, brought the industrial and landed interests closer together. An illuminating piece of economic history could be unfolded by drawing up a list of the marriages which took place about this time between the families of the industrial capitalists and landed aristocrats. The landed and steel interests are now merged in the party of Imperialism, which has altered the basic theories of Liberalism and Conservatism. The landed and

large capitalists have dropped their historic quarrel for two reasons. Their interests are becoming more identical and they require mutual support in face of the revolutionary movement of Socialism. It is only during periods of social unrest, when the attention of the discontented propertyless class is directed towards the cause of their poverty, that we get a revival of the attacks upon the landed aristocracy. Thus during 1909, a period of desperation for the workers, the wage-earners were misled by the clap-trap of "Limehouse" orations, and by politicians who were at a later date to prove themselves as treacherous as they were pitiless and hypocritical.

The working-class movement grows clearer in viewpoint in the same measure that the capitalist system develops its contradictory tendencies. Thus at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution the workers' aims were difficult to discern apart from the aims of the smaller capitalists. The Chartist movement witnessed the advance of the workers in boldness of demands; but due to lack of a definite aim and object this movement passed away. The London dock strike revealed a new spirit in the industrial artisan. And at the beginning of the twentieth century the British Socialist movement, while realising that Capitalism had to be removed, was very hazy as to how Socialism was to be organised and Capitalism overthrown. So difficult indeed was this question that the most influential section of the Labour movement repudiated revolution and the class struggle. It fell back upon the theories of the middle class, and advocated Nationalisation or State Control. These ideas were propagated for over twenty years as "evolutionary" Socialism.* Fortunately for the British workingclass movement, recent tendencies in capitalist evolution have clearly shewn that State Control is the most oppressive form of capitalist administration. In other words, the historic role and function of the State has, since the war, asserted itself and has, therefore, caused confusion in the ranks of the "evolutionary" State Socialists. It is in this way that Capitalism by the laws of its own development exposes the superficial intellectuals of the "Socialistic" middle class. On the other hand, the Russian Revolution showed the function of revolution in destroying an effete State. This lesson from Russia again illustrates the fact that social development explains the meaning of revolution and its historic work in

human evolution. Thus not only has Capitalism exploded the claims of the State "Socialists;" it was left to the Russian working class to demonstrate the absurdity of an "evolutionary" movement which had for its not very clear aim the reforming of Capitalism. These two events — the Revolution in Russia and the capitalists' demand for State control — have had far-reaching effects on the outlook of the British working class.

Before defining the attitude of modern scientific Socialism towards the capitalist State, it is imperative to examine the conditions which have fostered the idea that the State is a benevolent institution.

Middle Class Conception of State

The development of Capitalism is towards the concentration and centralisation of capital. This law which Marx so ably formulated has been criticised by "revisionists" like Edouard Bernstein; it is now admitted to be correct by the most critical of anti-Socialists. In the struggle for markets the tendency is for the large and centralised capitals to crush out the smaller capitals. Thus with the progress of Capitalism the smaller capitalists get thrust out of the ranks of the capitalist class. This accounts for the appearance in recent years of the new or so-called "middle class" — the intellectual proletariat. It is from this class that teachers, civil servants, journalists, secretaries, etc., are drawn. The modern middle class realises that the development of Capitalism will not add to the security of its members. Indeed it clearly understands that its ranks are being dangerously overcrowded by brilliant men forcing their way from the industrial wage-slave level and also by defeated combatants in the savage struggle among the capitalists. The intellectual wage-workers have no definite political ideals. Many of them are compelled to play the political game of their employers. Some of them fondly and vainly imagine that one day they may enter the ranks of the capitalist class; these, consequently, support the political interests of Capitalism. The most original and by far the cleverest section of the middle-class intellectuals have agitated for the extension of municipal and State enterprise. Many of them have seen that the safest investment for the funds of the middle class have been in municipal loans.

They are, therefore, energetic in their agitation on behalf of Municipalisation. They also realise that certain services in large towns, such as gas, water, trams, etc., lend themselves, by their very nature, to monopoly. Between the desire for a safe investment and the fear of monopoly, the middle class has been highly successful in its advocacy of Municipalisation. This explains why it comes about that in large cities like Glasgow the cars, gas, water, etc., had been municipalised long before any "Labour" men entered the Council.

The middle-class activity on behalf of State enterprise or control is due to the fact that the future of competitive Capitalism shows little hope of the intellectual proletarians improving their lot. With the extension of the activities of the State, new avenues of well-paid official jobs are opened up. The candidates for these official posts have to pass examinations for which they have to be specially prepared. It is indeed a problem for modern middle-class parents to find well-paid situations for their sons and daughters. To them the extension of State ownership shows a way out of the difficulty. Consequently during the past few years there has been an amazing increase in the number of State employees. Small wonder that the middle class looks upon the State as a glorified institution, as something destined to save the world. The economic ideal of the intellectual wage-earner is a national State controlling the industry of the country, in which each is rewarded according to a weird theory called the "rent of ability." Thus, just as the capitalist uses capital as the test of remuneration, just as the wages-labourer demands the social organisation and control of the products of labour, so the middle-class intellectual desires ability to be the test of income. And as Capitalism controlled by individual capitalists is property domination, so a State managed by middle-class bureaucrats would be an intellectual despotism. The intellectual proletarians are indeed anxious to ape the luxuries of the rich, consequently their social demands aim at incomes. Whereas the demand of the wages-labourer is for the social control of the wealth created by labour in order to achieve economic freedom.

The theorists of the middle class who demand State and municipal enterprise have been grouped under the banner of the "Fabians." The most serious aspect about their advocacy of State and municipal ownership has

been their labelling these bourgeois reforms as Socialism. Unfortunately it is only too true that British Socialism has been dangerously influenced by the spurious "socialism" of middleclass Fabianism. The most influential political leaders of the British Labour movement have been advocating State ownership for over twenty years as Socialism. These men, springing from the teaching profession and the Civil Service, have taken their conception of Socialism from their middle class colleagues, and until recently made no sympathetic attempt to understand the aims of the Socialism of the international proletariat. Every advance in Municipalisation was heralded as Socialism in practice; every extension of State control was greeted as a conquest by the workers. And in a recent handbook* on "Socialism" appears a chapter giving a list of State enterprises. The chapter is headed "Socialism in the Making." A close scrutiny of the various undertakings controlled by the State and enumerated in this volume clearly demonstrates that, instead of these making for the economic freedom of Labour, they tend to reinforce Capitalism and perpetuate class rule! The number of enterprises which the author suggests could be controlled by the State are sufficient to make the average middle-class family see a solution of the problem regarding future "incomes" in the extension of State officialdom.

The growing unrest in the ranks of the workers is forcing the propertied interests to rely ever more on the power of the State to maintain "order." Hence the intellectual apologists of Capitalism have sought to show that every measure of State control and activity is a step forward in the best interests of society. The cunning nature of the ruling class is clearly seen when it uses the State powers to crush a strike which is opposed to the best interests of "society." By "society" is meant the propertied interests! In this way superficial observers see in the State something which means "order" and which represents "society." It is the aim of every ruling class to further its economic interests by showing that it is really furthering the interests of society. This is necessary for the property owners, because it hides the class nature of their activity. In the measure that the modern capitalist class can show that the State represents the community, in the same measure is all suspicion removed regarding the real class function of the

State. When, therefore, prominent Labour politicians assert that the State is society, and that it represents social order, then the ruling class have much to be thankful for, and have little to fear from a Labour movement nurtured on such capitalistic sophistry. By such means the State has been glorified and the workers taught to rely upon it. When, therefore, the capitalists of Britain controlling large amalgamations of centralised capital required to make British Capitalism a National Trust against foreign competition, they were able to advocate State control and quote Fabian and I.L.P. writers in support of their advocacy. Thus a false conception of Socialism became the means of misleading Labour. So eager have the State "Socialists" been to bestow the label of "Socialism" upon profit-making institutions that a modern Statesman could say "we are all Socialists nowadays," Any demands, such as the reduction of taxes, the extension of tramway car systems, opening of municipal pawnshops and burying-grounds, have been advocated as "socialistic" legislation.' Thus Marx in his criticism of the French crisis of 1848 shows how the capitalist class — i.e., the bourgeoisie — cultivated dangerous reform nostrums under the title of Socialism. He says: — "Whether the question was the right of petition or the duty on wine, the liberty of the press or free trade, clubs or municipal laws, protection of individual freedom or the regulation of national economy, the slogan returns ever again, the theme is monotonously the same, the verdict is ever ready and unchanged: Socialism! Even bourgeois liberalism is pronounced socialistic; socialistic, alike, is pronounced popular education; and, likewise, socialistic is national financial reform. It was socialistic to build a railroad where already a canal was; and it was socialistic to defend oneself with a stick when attacked with a sword." The capitalist class fears revolutionary Socialism; it seeks to make Socialism a term at once contradictory and confusing; and it can best accomplish this by dubbing the most essential things necessary to the development of Capitalism as — Socialism. Municipalisation, Nationalisation, and Trustification are all parts of the higher evolved Capitalism. These things are no more "steps" in the direction of Socialism than is the general centralisation and concentration of capital. On the Continent State-owned railways are not the outcome of "steps" towards Socialism, but are the result of these nations requiring their

railroads at a moment's notice for the purpose of the mobilisation of their armies. State ownership is also a means of keeping the revolutionary working class in its place by the heavy hand of a tyrannical and bureaucratic plutocracy. The growth of Capitalism is entering upon the period wherein the whole force of the capitalist class will be centred upon suppressing the "unrest" among the workers, A great deal of the labour "unrest" is due to the presence of many irritating grievances in the workshop* caused by unsympathetic and ovebearing State officials; and the wage-earner is in sheer terror at the insecurity of his employment. As Capitalism enters upon its final stage the speeding-up process will be intensified, due to the ever increasing conflict for the world's markets. Competition will tend to accelerate national rivalries and the productive forces will have to be controlled with greater care than hitherto in order to eliminate overlapping within the nation. The desire to control national production, the fear of industrial unrest, and the wish to enforce discipline upon the workers will compel the capitalist class to extend State control. The extension of State control will bring with it armies of official bureaucrats, who will only be able to maintain their posts by tyrannising and limiting the freedom of the workers. The nominal wages of the workers may rise, but it will be at the expense of their relative position in society and of the limitation of their freedom. Within such a system the workers will be little better than serfs. And instead of having to overthrow a system buttressed by a handful of individual capitalists, the workers will be faced with a system reinforced by a gigantic army of State-subsidised officials, who will fight like tigers to maintain their status and power. Such indeed is the logical outcome of the advocacy of State or National ownership. It is a social despotism organised from above.

Not only will Capitalism be strengthened as a consequence of State control, but it will dominate in an ever-intensified form the press and the educational forces. The working-class movement has not realised the tremendous influence that capitalist thought wields over the brain of the workers through the press. It is absurd to imagine that even a working class with universal suffrage can vote intelligently until it understands its class interests and its historic mission. The press has such a far-reaching power over the thoughts

and actions of the workers that the first step taken by the State during a crisis is to set up a Censor over the newspapers. During normal conditions the class interests of the capitalists are sufficient guarantees to ensure that the ideology of Capitalism will be emphasised in the press for the consumption of the subject class. This aspect of the case was clearly stated in one of a series of articles published in *The Socialist*: — “We know that certain superficial critics will demur at our analysis, and will insist that as the workers control most votes, they control the State.

“This presentment of the case overlooks some very important facts. The ideas which determine how the workers vote are ideas which they gather from the press. No one dare deny that the press of this country is owned, controlled, and dominated by the capitalist class and reflects its interests and aspirations. The press itself has become a capitalist industry and is run by the Northcliffes, the Hultons, etc., for profit — just like any ordinary capitalist undertaking. In this way the owners of the press find their interests identical with the capitalist class, consequently they strive to perpetuate the profit-making system. It is true that like all competitive capitals the press have their minor quarrels. Let, however, the Clyde workers or the South Wales miners revolt, and the press will immediately drop its petty differences and use its limited strength — from *Comic Cuts* down to *John Bull*, from the *London Times* down to the *Daily News*, from *Punch* down to the *Clarion* — to blast the rebels, by dragging from the dictionary of slander every foul and cowardly epithet of slimy vituperation. Let the uncrowned monarch of blatant prevarication forge a speech in order to vent his spleen upon those whom he was unable to fight fairly and openly, the press knowing full well that such an oration had never been delivered, **MUST** publish it. It knows that to print the facts would mean — as it did mean— **SUPPRESSION**. And it is from this press that the workers get most of their ideas. The press, controlled by capitalist interests, is a glorified conspiracy to dope the minds of the workers, to throw dust in their eyes regarding their true interests. Who knows better than those in the Labour movement that the capitalist class, through its press, can hound on subsidised and beery hooligans, led by light-fingered financiers masquerading as full-fledged officers in uniform, to

smash up meetings? And do not the illustrated papers print scenes depicting the clubbing of anti-militarists as an incitement to other hooligans to do likewise, and as a warning to rebels what their fate may be?

“All our ideas regarding happenings abroad and at home only reach us through the press after the critical eye of the defender of the interests of capital, the censor, has caused ‘dangerous’ news to be deleted. These facts are patent to the Labour movement. Therefore, the capitalist class with its gigantic press need not fear, and does not fear, in the meantime, the votes of its wage-slaves. By controlling the press, capital is able to control the workers votes. In this way the master class is able to take out of the hands of Labour the control of the political machine. It is for this very reason that the profiteers have so organised and disciplined their press. This state of affairs must continue until the Socialist movement realises that its propaganda only becomes important the moment it begins to set on foot a press owned, controlled, and disciplined by the party of the social revolution. Because the votes in the hands of uneducated workers whom the Socialist literature cannot reach are votes for Capitalism. And the capitalist class know it. Hence its control over its press.”

Lord Northcliffe, speaking to the Players’ Club, New York, recently admitted that the censorship of the press was such that readers of newspapers were deliberately confused. His words were: — “The people were not permitted to know the truth, and when the truth finally emerged out of costly blunders and sacrifices they were loth to accept it.”

The power of finance over the press was admitted (luring a banquet of newspaper men in New York (1916).

In response to a toast on “The Independent Press,” Mr. John Swinton said: — “There is no such thing in America as an independent press, unless it is in the country towns.

“You know it and I know it. There is not one of you who dares to write his honest opinion, and, if you did, you know beforehand that it would never appear in print.

“I am paid 150 dollars a week for keeping my honest opinions out of the paper I am connected with — others of you are paid similar salaries for similar

things — and any one of you who would be so foolish as to write his honest opinions would be out on the streets looking for another job.

“The business of the New York journalist is to destroy the truth, to lie outright, to pervert, to vilify, to fawn at the feet of Mammon, and to sell his race and country for his daily bread.

“You know this and I know it, and what folly is this to be toasting an ‘independent press.’

“We are tools and vassals of rich men behind the scenes. We are the jumpingjacks; they pull the strings and we dance. Our talents, our possibilities, and our lives are all the property of other men. We are intellectual prostitutes.”

A prominent English politician, Mr. Gibson Bowles, confessed in an article in the *Candid Review* that journalism is simply a trade. The writer declares that the only idea behind newspaper proprietors is how to make a profit. The hired journalist has to write “to order for pay.” “No newspaper leading article is more worthy of belief than a pillmonger’s advertisement of his own pills.” The really honest writer who equips himself with the requisite knowledge to understand and grapple the problems confronting humanity excludes himself from the sphere of journalism.” There is no market for him, no employment for him, and he, usually a poor man, either turns to writing to order; if he be of the better sort, stops writing altogether and takes refuge in some more honourable trade.” The power of the press as a moulder of working-class opinion cannot be over-emphasised. The ideas and thoughts of most workers come from the capitalist-controlled press. These ideas and thoughts are precisely the ideas and thoughts which correspond to the economic interests of the capitalist class and which make for the perpetuation of the capitalist system. We see, therefore, how the economic interests of the capitalist class, manifesting itself through the press, moulds the political ideas of the workers. In this way economic inequality makes the so-called political democracy of Britain a sham. Real democracy can only proceed from economic equality. It is generally assumed that the voting power of the workers gives them control of the “important” political issues placed before the country during General Elections. This, however, is a fallacy. The working class is seldom permitted to decide any important measures within capitalist society. The

elections of 1906 were fought upon the “great” question of Tariff Reform versus Free Trade. This issue is a minor quarrel between two sections of the ruling class regarding the better method of facilitating the exchange of commodities. Whichever side wins, the capitalist class will continue to own and control the means of productions and will continue to exploit the workers. Judging by what many Liberals said during those elections, the introduction of a tariff would have meant the ruin of society. Nevertheless a Liberal Statesman — Mr. M’Kenna — placed a tariff on certain goods. And Mr. Austen Chamberlain, at the request of the Bombay millionaires, placed a tax on Lancashire cotton entering India without Parliament even discussing the matter! The political history of latter-day Capitalism shows a tendency to lash the workers into a fury during an election, and to get them divided regarding questions of no real importance to them. Once, however, the ruling class has been returned to political power; once it has the State—which includes the Army, Navy, spies, police, legal machinery, etc., etc. — in its grasp, then it puts into operation the legislation that is vital to its interest and enforces it upon the community. The real and important laws necessary to the perpetuation of Capitalism are seldom placed before the constituencies at election time. Such measures as the declaration of war, the Defence of the Realm Act, Munition Acts, Military and Industrial Conscription, are never placed before the “democracy.” Through its control of the press, the capitalist class can always launch out upon some sham fight to keep the workers from realising their true class interests. Journalists and editors can be depended upon to show the special advantages which will accrue to Labour by taking sides on either this side or that. The journalists are not above “writing up” both sides of the great controversy by attacking and defending the same proposition. The Rev. Mr. Graham, in his study of “Russell of The Scotsman,” shows how that brilliant editor, in his younger days, wrote “slashing” leading articles in the Liberal and Conservative organs of the same town. Thus editors can change their chairs as easily as politicians can change their coats.

By using its economic power to control the press and the political State, the capitalist class also controls the avenues of education. The power of this influence was clearly defined by Mr. J. Hobson, who has shewn that the

teachers are compelled to propagate economics and history in the interests of the class who provide their salaries. The legend that universities are impartial regarding what is taught within their walls has been exposed by the persecution meted out to distinguished scholars who have opposed the imperialism of the capitalist class since 1914. With the spread of independent working-class education among the workers, organised by the Marxians, the financiers' press has called upon the universities to bestir themselves and fight the influence of the tutorial classes which seek to educate the workers regarding the principles of scientific Socialism. At no distant date the struggle between Capital and Labour will manifest itself on the question as to which class will control the education of adult workers in social science. Already the attitude of revolutionary Socialism has been defined. It contends that just as Labour has been compelled to create its own press and political and industrial organisations, so it must build up its own educational organisation. Labour must combat Capitalism in every avenue of social activity.

Thus Capitalism to-day presents itself, through its various institutions, as a social system organised from top to bottom to perpetuate wage slavery and profits. It dominates industry, politics, education, and the press. The modern ruling class is undoubtedly the most splendidly equipped exploiting force that has ever existed. Because of its control of the means of production, and in consequence of the increasing ratio of exploitation, it becomes ever more necessary for the capitalist class to enforce its power over the workers by means of the State. Hence as Capitalism becomes more decadent, and the greater is the number of the workers who rally round the banner of revolutionary Socialism, the more the capitalist class is driven, in order to reinforce its system, to rely upon the power of the State as a means of keeping the workers in check and of prolonging the system of wage slavery. Capitalism, when seen in its true light, is not a democracy; it is what the Athenians called a "Timocracy"—the rule of private property, or, to use another word, a plutocracy.

During the past few years every attempt on the part of the workers to wring better conditions from the employing class has resulted in the State placing its powers at the disposal of the capitalists. Featherstone, Belfast, Tonypandy,

etc., are illustrations regarding the use of troops against strikers. Again, there are innumerable instances where the police have been used for the same purpose, while an even more subtle influence has been the interference of Statesmen in wages disputes. A few days before the great war Sir Edward Grey promised the aid of the powers of State to British capitalists seeking profit abroad; and likewise Mr. Asquith, confronted with a strike in 1911, as chief representative of the State, made a similar offer to the railway directors at home. The history of the war further demonstrates the great contrast that exists in Capitalism between the lives of the workers and the property of the ruling class. The war has also shown that during any crisis the State, by a series of Orders in Council, can suspend the Constitution and rule by the power of sheer intimidation. It is futile to argue that such measures are the work of militarists. The State has behind every mandate it promulgates the armed force of the nation. It is this power which enforces the will of the ruling class.

Capitalism has reached the phase at which its greatest safety lies in hampering its true evolution. Like the social systems which preceded it, Capitalism has developed a series of inherent contradictions which are fettering industrial growth. These social contradictions demonstrate that the system has entered upon its period of decadence, and that it is now trying to postpone its inevitable dissolution. That is why during the past few years Capitalism has relied more and more upon the State; it is seeking to throw barriers in the way of its own development in order to stave off its downfall. State control, while making for a better organised Capitalism, is the last great organised effort of the ruling class to perpetuate wage slavery.

The modern productive forces are of a purely social nature. The Industrial Revolution made the social creation of wealth possible. The labour-process is now so subdivided that the energy of all sorts and conditions of workers enter into the production of simple commodities. Labour is now a social quantity; neither colour nor sex counts in the production of wealth. Social labour creates social wealth; that is the great economic truism of to-day. But the socially produced wealth is individually owned and controlled. Capitalism thus presents a great contradiction; its existence is threatened by the fact that

social production in the course of its evolution is bound to substitute social control for the control of the individual capitalists. Capitalism is struggling to retain individual ownership vested in the hands of a class. The law of capitalist development makes the social contradiction more apparent; indeed, from this fundamental contradiction — social production and individual control — there springs forth many others.

The competition for markets compel the capitalists to produce as cheaply as possible. This can only be done, apart from lowering wages, by speeding up labour either by subdividing or diluting processes, or by introducing labour-displacing machinery. In either case the struggle for markets means that more and more wealth is created with less and less labour. Thus Capitalism not only gluts the world's markets with commodities, but in doing so it throws the wage-workers into unemployment. The increasing unemployed, side by side with overstocked markets, is a serious enough contradiction, but it breeds others; it forces capitalist economy to preserve itself by waste. So productive are the social forces that it is becoming more difficult for the international capitalist class to find new outlets for its surplus capital. The millions spent on armaments is a form of waste which temporarily eases the problem regarding surplus capital. These millions spent on armaments are exploited from international Labour working under conditions of peace; but these PEACE conditions become the very basis for war. Hence modern Capitalism in its mad career through its maze of contradictions has been forced to embark upon the path of Imperialism. Imperialism, however, only makes Capitalism universal. Every new territory or colony opened up and capitalised brings the "backward" countries within the vortex of Capitalism. Imperialism, like State control — they are inseparably connected — only makes for a more highly organised and centralised social system. In this way modern Capitalism internationalises and socialises the economic foundations of society; it thus hastens the day of its dissolution and prepares the foundations for the future International Republic of Labour. Not only has Capitalism socialised the production of wealth, it has also created the proletariat, the army of workers whose historic mission it is to socialise the control of production in the interests of humanity. Nowhere has this

law been so well outlined as by Marx, who, in summing up the historical tendency of Capitalism, says: — “One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralisation, or this expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop, on an ever-extending scale, the co-operative form of the labour process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labour into instruments of labour only usable in common, the economising of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialised labour, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world-market, and, with this, the international character of the capitalistic regime. Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all the advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation ; but with this, too, grows the revolt of the working class — a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralisation of the means of production, and socialisation of labour, at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.” Like a Nemesis treads the avenging contradictions of Capitalism no matter where it extends its relentless power. Every instrument which it uses to prolong its existence ultimately becomes a weapon to strike it down.

References

1. England under the Hanoverians — Robertson.
2. The reader will find many similar extracts in Marx's Capital.
3. Socialism and War (Boudin), How Europe Armed for War (Newbold).
4. See literature of I.L.P., which confuses State Control with Socialism.
5. Theoretical System of Marx — Boudin.
6. Socialist Year-Book (issued by I.L.P.) — Bruce Glaiser. (This book

contains a list of hundreds of enterprises which could be State-owned.)

7. See the "Immediate Demands" programme of the old S.D.F.
8. Eighteenth Brumaire — Karl Marx. S.L. Press. 1/6
9. Literary and Historical Essays — Rev. Mr. Graham.
10. The Times (speech delivered 10th July, 1914).

REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM

The modern movement of revolutionary Socialism is the direct outcome of the economic conditions evolved within Capitalism. The international working class is beginning to realise that freedom within the framework of Capitalism is impossible. Economic development has exposed the fallacies of the Utopian reformers; it has demonstrated that the only means whereby the social problem — with its national and international complications — can be solved, is in the overthrow of Capitalism and the inauguration of a Socialist Republic. Hence Socialism is not a reform movement: it is a revolutionary movement aiming simultaneously at the destruction of Capitalism and the construction of Socialism.

The social reformers, who pose as Socialists, seek to uplift the workers by nationalising or controlling the means of production through the State. We have already seen that the perpetuation of Capitalism has forced the ruling class to adopt this policy of State control. We have also seen that the extension of State control means the finding of jobs for the intellectual proletariat, the so-called middle class. Independent Labour politicians — as distinguished from revolutionary Socialists — have put forward several ideas for preventing State officials from becoming bureaucratic tyrants. The whole difficulty of the problem rests upon the misapprehension of the function of the State and how it is organised. Whenever a modern Statesman is appointed to control any industrial concern he has to elect expert and permanent officials who

know something about that industry. These officials are appointed by the State — i.e., from above; they are only answerable to the State minister who has to depend upon them for all his information regarding his department. The officials are conscious of their power, and they use it. There is no method whereby it is possible to have democratic State control, this is due to the fact that State control is an attempt to make a geographically elected institution conduct an industrial process.

The State rests upon a geographical basis; its units are a conglomeration of territorial areas; and its members are elected by constituencies. Therefore the members returned to Parliament as representatives of constituencies have no direct relationship with the real basis of society — its industrial process.

The constituents have the right to vote, not according to their function as workers, but according to their status as electors in the geographical area wherein they reside. At the same time, so overwhelming is the influence of modern industry that it enforces itself upon the State. Thus Statesmen are unable to make any drastic moves regarding industry or finance until they first consult the City — i.e., the capitalist interests. Therefore, when the State attempts to control industry, it is undertaking a task for which it is not fitted. Neither the constituents nor the ministers elected to conduct an industry are in any way organically or functionally connected with industry — i.e., in so far as they operate within the Constitution of the State. The State in controlling an industry has to connect a geographically elected administration with an industrial one. That connection, which links up the former with the latter, is represented by expert and permanent officials. No amount of quibbling can overcome this grave difficulty. Thus the social reformers and State “Socialists” have been urging the formation of a condition of things which by its very nature, not only brings the mass of the workers under the despotic rule of State officials, but which, as a means of controlling the workers, has become one of the last and most effective props for prolonging wage slavery. In the last analysis State ownership is more a means of controlling and regimenting the workers than of controlling industry. The Munitions Acts made but a little attempt to control the employers, but there can be no doubt that it attempted to absolutely control and dominate the workers. Thus State

control of shipping enabled a Chancellor of the Exchequer to make 500 per cent, on some of his investments; the same minister, however, arrogantly declared that high prices were caused by high wages!* Capitalism cannot be controlled. But it can be destroyed and replaced by a workers' Industrial Republic.

The attempt of the State to control industry is therefore the attempt of the ruling class to dominate Labour. The purely industrial basis of modern society is reacting against the geographical basis on which the Government is elected. The conflict between these bases is another of the contradictions undermining the territorial State. Capitalism, as we have already stated, not only creates the conditions which must destroy it, it brings forth the working class which will utilise these conditions in the work of destruction. Further, Capitalism creates the industrial basis upon which the new social system will be erected.

Not only have the labourists and State "Socialists" been unable to comprehend the nature of the State, they have also failed to understand its social function. Our analysis has shown that the State is the weapon by means of which the ruling class preserves "order" in a system rent with the class struggle and conflicting social interests, t Such an institution presupposes the ownership of the means of life controlled by a class protecting its economic power by the armed force of society in order to preserve its class rule. As we have seen, the State evolved in human society after the advent of private property and after the rise of classes. With the disappearance of private property, with the passing of a ruling and a subject class, the State, too, will pass away. The State "Socialists" having failed to understand the nature and the function of the State, have written volumes to show that there is no class struggle and to prove that "evolutionary" Socialism is much superior to revolutionary action.*

While the State "Socialists" and Labourists have been unable to grasp the essential basis of Capitalism by their economic studies, the social system itself will prove that Marxism is correct. It is only necessary to say that the State "Socialists" do not understand history, and fail to comprehend the dynamic force behind the revolutions of the past. The class struggle, as outlined in the

“Communist Manifesto,” is now one of the admitted facts of modern historic philosophy. Modern sociologists who really understand historic evolution are agreed, despite their general opposition to Socialism, that the Marxian historical conception is correct.

The revolutionary Socialist denies that State ownership can end in anything other than a bureaucratic despotism. We have seen why the State cannot democratically control industry. Industry can only be democratically owned and controlled by the workers electing directly from their own ranks industrial administrative committees. Socialism will be fundamentally an industrial system; its constituencies will be of an industrial character. Thus those carrying on the social activities and industries of society will be directly represented in the local and central industrial councils of social administration. In this way the powers of such delegates will flow upwards from those carrying on the work and conversant with the needs of the community. When the central administrative industrial committee meets it will represent every phase of social activity. Hence the capitalist political or geographical State will be replaced by the industrial administrative committee of Socialism. The transition from the one social system to the other will be the social revolution. The political State throughout history has meant the government of men by ruling classes; the Republic of Socialism will be the government of industry administered on behalf of the whole community. The former meant the economic and political subjection of the many; the latter will mean the economic freedom of all — it will be, therefore, a true democracy.

The slave States of Greece and Rome existed to exploit and intimidate the propertyless slaves. The feudal State buttressed the interests of the landed class at the expense of the serf on the land and the craftsmen in the towns. The modern capitalist State, the last in the series, will pass away with the inauguration of Industrial Democracy. Socialism will require no political State because there will be neither a privileged property class nor a downtrodden propertyless class; there will be no social disorder as a result, because there will be no clash of economic interests; there will be no need to create a power to make “order.” Thus, as Engels shows, the State will

die out. With it will end the government of men and make way for the administration of industry. Likewise Bebel declares: — “Along with the State die out its representatives — cabinet ministers, parliaments, standing armies, police and constables, courts, district attorneys, prison officials, tariff and tax collectors; in short, the whole political apparatus. Barracks, and such other military structures, palaces of law and of administration, prisons—all will now await better use. Ten thousand laws, decrees, and regulations become so much rubbish; they have only historic value. The great and yet the petty parliamentary struggles with which the men of tongue imagine they rule and guide the world are no more; they will have made room for administrative colleges and delegations, whose attention will be engaged in the best means of production and distribution, in ascertaining the volume of supplies needed, in introducing and applying effective improvements in art, in architecture, in intercourse, in the process of production, etc. These are all practical matters, visible and tangible, towards which everyone stands objectively, there being no personal interests hostile to society to affect their judgment.” We see, therefore, that the function of the future administration of society will be industrial. The constructive element in the social revolution will be the action of the Industrial Union seizing the means of production in order to administer the wants of the community.

True to the dictum of social science, that the embryo of the future social system must be nourished within the womb of the old system, the revolutionary Socialist movement sets out to build up within Capitalism the industrial organisation of the workers which will carry on the administrative work under Socialism. Industrial Unionism not only differs from sectional craft unionism in structure; Industrial Unionism’s most important function is to unite all the workers for the great and glorious task of carrying on the production of wealth under Socialism on behalf of the community. Thus Industrial Unionism is the constructive weapon in the coming social revolution.

It does not follow, however, that political action plays no part in the social revolution. We have already seen that the special function of the State is to protect the interests of the ruling class. In order to facilitate the work

of the industrial organisation it is absolutely imperative for the workers to disarm the capitalist class by wrenching from it its power over the political State. The State powers include the armed forces of the nation which may be turned against the revolutionary workers. The political weapon of Labour, by destroying the capitalist control of the State, makes possible a peaceful social revolution. But in order to tear the State out of the grasp of the ruling class the workers political organisation must capture the political machinery of Capitalism. Daniel De Leon, in a famous pamphlet, "The Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World" — a work equally as epoch-making as the "Communist Manifesto" — says regarding the function of the political organisation of Labour: — "Inestimable is the value, dignified the posture, of the political movement. It affords the Labour movement the opportunity to ventilate its purposes and its methods free, over and above board, in the noonday light of the sun, whereas and otherwise its agitation would be consigned to the circumscribed sphere of the rat-hole. The political movement renders the masses accessible to the propaganda of Labour; it raises the Labour movement above the category of a 'conspiracy'; it places the movement in line with the spirit of the age, which, on the one hand, denies the power of conspiracy in matters that not only affect the masses but in which the masses must themselves be intelligent actors, and, on the other hand, demands the freest of utterance. In short and in line, the political movement bows to the methods of civilised discussion: it gives a chance to the peaceful solution of the great question at issue." It is, therefore, the special function of the political movement to uproot the capitalist State. The work of the political weapon is purely destructive, to destroy the capitalist system.

Thus revolutionary Socialism is distinguished from State "Socialism" in so far as it clearly understands what it is out for. Moreover, it has an organised policy, at once destructive and constructive, to achieve its aim and object. Revolutionary Socialism by its close attention to the education of the workers is teaching them to think correctly in order that they may act correctly. We know that the continual pressure of capitalist exploitation in the mine, the mill, and the factory, etc., will compel the workers to organise ever closer along class lines. We know that the development of wage slavery, and the

intensification of the class struggle, will give a clearer vision to the workers regarding the future. Capitalism in its international expansion fashions the world in its image; and, just as like produces like, so must Capitalism by its own mechanical development tend to make the aims and methods of the international working class more and more uniform. Hence every year witnesses the closer unity of the international proletariat. The war, despite the temporary friction it created among the less clearly poised workers, will only accentuate and solidify the revolutionary movement of the world. The rumblings of the future revolution may be distinctly heard. A new spirit permeates the British working class; the new demands are not only for better working conditions but for freedom. That spirit portends emancipation for Labour. Already the capitalist class is attempting to stave off its impending defeat by seeking to rely upon the extension of the activities of the State. But the workers are beginning to know what State control means; the war has taught them that. As the activity of the revolutionary movement extends, as its influence grows, the capitalist class will be compelled to use the State to intimidate Labour. And by doing so Capitalism will help to teach the workers what the State is and what its functions are.

It is perhaps strange that so much misunderstanding should exist regarding the State. It is due in this country principally to the fact that the so-called political leaders of Labour have failed to acquaint themselves with the struggles of the international workers* and the classic literature of scientific Socialism. Marx, Engels, Liebknecht, Bebel, Kautsky, Lafargue, De Leon, Labriola, Morris, and the many other brilliant men who have thrown in their lot with the revolutionary movement of Labour, have by their analysis of society, past and present, clearly defined the function of the State. But the great awakening which has taken place recently among the workers regarding the State has made the one-time advocates of State Socialism confess that they had not clearly defined their terms and that they must work out new aims and objects.* Capitalism in its development has taught them what they failed to grasp by their superficial glance at the history of the past and their middle-class interpretation of the economics of modern society. If these men, now aware of their errors, courageously throw their past mistakes behind

them, and take their place in the ranks of the revolutionary movement, they may yet undo the evil their past work has wrought. But if they prefer to hug their fallacies, the British workers will sweep past them in their historic march to uproot the last of all State despotisms — the Capitalist State.